

“An Undisputed Right to this Offering”: An Edition of Eliza Haywood’s Dedication of *The Female Spectator* to Juliana Colyear, Duchess of Leeds

Introduction

Like the characters masquerading in her early amatory fiction, Eliza Haywood’s biography is masked in obscurity. Here are some facts that scholars agree on. Haywood was born the daughter of a London shopkeeper “probably” in 1690, married in about 1710 and “probably” left him between 1715-1720. She associated early in her career with Whigs such as Richard Steele (who with Joseph Addison co-founded *The Spectator*, from which Haywood’s *Female Spectator* derives its name) and Daniel Defoe, and was publicly criticized by Alexander Pope as a “stupid, infamous, scribbling woman” in 1731. She produced little during the 1730s and reappeared on the literary scene in 1744 as the author of *The Female Spectator*.

Haywood literary criticism saw a boon in the late 20th century after feminists unearthed her.¹ Only since about 2010, though, has her *Female Spectator* garnered the serious attention of scholars, despite its historically significant status as the first periodical by and for women and despite the fact that it was Haywood’s most popular work during her lifetime. Previously, scholars understood *The Female Spectator* as Haywood’s “testament to her shift away from the audacity that distinguished her earlier writings, toward a more sober didacticism allegedly characteristic of her later years as a writer” (Girten, p. 56). Kristin Girten counters that understanding, participating in the newer critical framework of viewing *The Female Spectator* as subtly subversive. Along with Kathryn King’s highly lauded *Political Biography of Eliza Haywood* and Lynn Wright and Donald Newman’s *Fair Philosopher: Eliza Haywood and The Female Spectator*, I advance the persona of Haywood, even “late” Haywood, as a political and philosophical writer, wisely navigating the circumstances afforded her as one of the most prolific (in terms of genre), 18th-century women writers. In 1786, the first female philosopher was recognized by the British Royal Society: Caroline Herschel, the British Royal Society recognized a female philosopher for the very first time: Caroline Herschel, whose discovery Frances Burney termed “the first lady’s comet” (Girten, p. 60). Haywood and her periodical’s “correspondents” were dubbed the “fair philosophers” 42 years before that, in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* (*Fair Philosopher* 15).² While “other texts by women from the same period are even more overt in

¹ For an example, see Helen Koon’s seminal article, “Eliza Haywood and the *Female Spectator*.” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 1, 1978, pp. 43-55.

² Scholars do not know whether Haywood wrote as the four correspondents herself, or if she did in fact edit other women’s writing as she purports to have done.

their challenge to gender disparity” (Girten, p. 70)—including those by Haywood’s younger self—*The Female Spectator* persuades in a different, perhaps more politically savvy and subtle, way.

For a woman to earn a living as a professional writer in a time period when doing so was often equated to prostitution required constant diplomacy. Cheryl Turner has examined how women writers benefited from sustained relationships with publishers, and scholars have focused on Haywood’s relationship with her frequent publisher late in her career, Thomas Gardner, but there exists no sustained study of Haywood’s relationship with her patrons, such as Juliana Colyear, Duchess of Leeds, to whom she dedicates the *Female Spectator* project at its onset. Sarah Prescott writes that “Eliza Haywood’s participation in and use of patronage has often been overlooked in favour of recent assessments of her as working almost exclusively in the world of the booksellers and printers” (p. 116), and King writes that “further research on Haywood’s dedicatory practices over the long trajectory of her writing life is needed before we can draw conclusions about the relationship between Haywood’s strategies as an author and the forms of patronage available to her” (*Fair Philosopher*, p. 117). Though research is lacking, close-reading Haywood’s dedications of her work to potential patrons offers examples of the art of persuasion through subtle flattery.

Haywood’s dedication of *The Female Spectator* to Colyear has been described as a continuation of Haywood’s “Hanoverian and pro-Marlborough sentiments”³ and resultant “fascination” with Sarah Churchill and her family⁴ (*Selected Fiction* xviii). Was Haywood successful in receiving payment from Colyear and her cousins, to whom other *Female Spectator* volumes are dedicated? If so, how much money did she receive? What was the extent of Haywood’s relationship with these women, if any other than the solicitation of funds for her writing? What was her rationale for targeting “patriotic” and unpatriotic patrons alike—even within the 24-month period of circulation of the same periodical?⁵ What was the effect on readers, that the periodical boasted Colyear’s name in the introductory pages? Is Haywood referring to Colyear’s second husband in the dedication, ignoring her first husband, Peregrine Osborne, the Duke of Leeds (rumored to be “something of a rake,” according to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*)? Due to the lack of sustained study on Haywood’s use of and success with patronage, these questions, like much of Haywood’s biography, are for now masked in obscurity.

In the dedicatory epistle to volume 1, Haywood writes that “because the chief view in publishing these monthly essays is to rectify some [societal] errors,” she wishes them to be placed “under the protection of” Colyear, who is “not only 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.” After paying due deference to her virtue and ancestral line, Haywood shifts strategies: She praises Colyear “for those innate graces, which no ancestry can give.” While Haywood engages with the necessary, laudatory rhetoric for obtaining patronage in the 18th-

³ The adjective “Hanoverian” describes supporters of the British House of Hanover, the dynasty that ruled the United Kingdom 1714-1901. Haywood refers to Colyear’s descendents Marlborough and Godolphin as “dear patriot-names” in the *Female Spectator* dedication.

⁴ Colyear was Sarah Churchill’s granddaughter; Churchill’s other granddaughters were the dedicatees of volumes two and four of *The Female Spectator*.

⁵ For more on this political situation that Haywood was treading, see *Fair Philosopher*, p. 117.

century, this shift indicates potentially pro-middle class sentiments. Haywood diplomatically appeals to upper-class and middle-class readerships simultaneously, by praising Colyear's ancestry and her virtue—"which no ancestry can give, no titles can embellish, nor no beauty atone for the want of." In *The Female Spectator's* dedication, Haywood performs with political and philosophical skill, honed in her unique positionality as a prolific writer in the male-dominated publishing world, through years of hard work "which no ancestry could give" her.

About This Edition

First issued by Gardner as a monthly periodical for two years, April 1744 to May 1746, *The Female Spectator's* popularity spurred Gardner (and his successor, H. Gardner) to reissue it in four volumes two years later, from 1748 to 1771, resulting in seven (official) editions over 27 years. Haywood's periodical was popular enough that in 1746, pirated editions began to surface out of Dublin. To compete with the piracies, Gardner began reprinting in the cheaper duodecimo format in 1748, 1750, 1755, 1776, and 1771. In 1775, the (non-numbered) edition issued in London and Glasgow with different title pages was the last edition to be printed for 226 years (*Fair Philosopher*, p. 194).

The highly acclaimed critical edition of *The Female Spectator (1744-1746)* published as part of the six-volume Pickering & Chatto *Selected Works of Eliza Haywood* in 2001-2002 marked the first release of Haywood's 960-page, 24-book periodical in its entirety since the 18th century. The editors sought to incorporate Haywood into the canon as "more than" an amatory novelist. King writes that, contrary to previous scholarly opinion, Haywood and her publisher aimed for *The Female Spectator* to earn a genteel readership during its time and in "futuraity" (King, "Editing Eliza Haywood's *The Female Spectator*"). The Pickering & Chatto *Selected Works* is also likewise available for an upscale readership (with a \$200+ price tag). This free edition is part of my project to make portions of Haywood's periodical glossed and edited, and available to a wider audience that includes scholars, graduate and undergraduate students.

Because scholars agree that *The Female Spectator* was never revised, by Haywood or anyone else, and, as Newman points out, "informal sight collation suggests that bona fide later editions were merely reset and, as the century wore on, shorn of long s's, capitalized nouns, and so forth" (p. 52), this edition is based on the first edition published by Gardner, dated 1745, from the Harvard University Houghton Library that was scanned for Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (ECCO).

Textual Note

The following emendations are included to improve the text's readability: the long s (ſ) is replaced by the short s throughout; the 18th-century convention of capitalizing and italicizing non-proper nouns is not retained; line spacing and indentation is updated to reflect modern letter/dedicatory format; and inadvertent printing errors are silently corrected.

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To Her Grace the Duchess of Leeds⁶

May It Please Your Grace,

As the chief view in publishing these monthly essays is to rectify some errors, which, small as they may seem at first, may, if indulged, grow up into greater, till they at last become vices, and make all the misfortunes of our lives; it was necessary to put them under the protection of a lady, not only 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, of all those perfections I endeavor to recommend.

It is not, therefore, madam, that you are descended from Marlborough or a Godolphin,⁷ dear as those patriot-names will ever be, while any sense of liberty remains in Britons; nor on the account of the high rank you hold in the world,⁸ nor for those charms with which nature has so profusely adorned your person; but for those innate graces, which no ancestry can give, no titles can embellish, nor no beauty atone for the want of, that Your Grace has an undisputed right to this offering, as the point aimed at by the work itself gives it in some measure a claim to your acceptance.

That promise, which the first years of life gave of a glorious maturity, we have seen completed long before Your Grace arrived at an age, which in others is requisite to ripen wit into wisdom, and concile⁹ the sparkling ideas of the one, with the correcting judgment of the other. — We beheld with admiration even in the most minute circumstances and actions; but the crown of all, was the happy choice of a partner¹⁰ in that state which is the chief end of our beings. — There shone your penetration,¹¹ when among so many admirers, you singled out him who alone was worthy of you. — One, who great as he is, is yet more good than great; and who has given such

⁶ Juliana Colyear (née Hele), Duchess of Leeds (1706-1794)

⁷ The names of John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722), and Sidney Godolphin, 1st Baron Godolphin (1645-1712), were considered “patriot-names” due to their partnership under Queen Anne, which “embodied the emerging military-fiscal state” (Harris). Marlborough and Godolphin, both Tories, were also united in friendship through Marlborough’s wife, Sarah—Colyear’s grandmother.

⁸ A duchess is the wife or widow of a duke, the highest rank below the monarch.

⁹ “Reconcile”

¹⁰ Juliana Osborne, widow of Peregrine Osborne, 3rd Duke of Leeds, married Charles Colyear, 2nd Earl of Portmore in 1732, four months after he was knighted. Colyear, a sporting associate of her first husband’s, served as a Scottish representative peer in the House of Lords 1734-1737. Colyear continued to call herself the Duchess of Leeds after her second marriage.

¹¹ “The action or capacity of penetrating something with the mind; keenness of perception or understanding; insight, acuteness, discernment” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, “Penetration, n.,” 2).

instances how much it is in the power of virtue to ennoble nobility, as all must admire, though few I fear will imitate.

Marriage, too long the jest of fools, and prostituted to the most base and sordid of aims, to you, illustrious pair, owes its recovered fame, and proves its institution is indeed divine.

But this is no more than what everyone is full of; and in entreating Your Grace's protection to the following sheets, I can only boast of being one among the millions who pray, that length of days, and uninterrupted health may continue that happiness to which nothing can be added, and that

I am,
with the most profound duty and submission,
may it please Your Grace,
Your Grace's
most humble,
most obedient, and most
faithfully devoted servant,

The Female Spectator