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Evoking the Salon: Eliza Haywood's the Female Spectator & the Conversation of Protofeminist Space

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
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EVOKING THE SALON:
ELIZA HAYWOOD'S *THE FEMALE SPECTATOR* &
THE CONVERSATION OF PROTOFEMINIST SPACE

By

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This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Gary Edward Dowd, who made his insatiable love for literature a bond between parent and child, child and universe. I owe to him, and to all my family, a great debt.

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Much as literary scholars may appear to be alone with their texts, we accomplish nothing in isolation. Thank you all.

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ABSTRACT

“Evoking the Salon: Eliza Haywood’s *The Female Spectator* & The Conversation of Protofeminist Space” reads Eliza Haywood’s 18th century periodical, *The Female Spectator*, as a reenactment of the feminocentric French salon within the discourse of print. Such a perspective reorients our perception of the periodical as a women’s miscellany, making it, instead, a unified hetero-intellectual space that participates in polyvalent, protofeminist gender construction. My reading of *The Female Spectator* uses the salon model of discourse to argue for Haywood’s deep interrogation of Addison and Steele’s seminal periodical, *The Spectator*, Haywood’s own subversively erotic novel, *Love in Excess*, and the conservative feminism of Mary Astell. In retracing these conversations, “Evoking the Salon” suggests we see Haywood’s periodical as evoking a new ‘republic of letters’ in England, a legacy necessary for the formation of English feminist consciousness thereafter.

INTRODUCTION: EVOKING THE SALON: ELIZA HAYWOOD'S *THE FEMALE SPECTATOR* & THE CONVERSATION OF PROTOFEMINIST SPACE

It behoves, therefore, every Individual of every Country in the World, whatever may be told them or how much seeming Cause soever they may have to flatter themselves with an Assurance of Freedom, not to neglect searching, with the most enquiring and impartial Eye, into all that passes; to examine into the most hidden Motives; and, disdaining to be guided by Appearances and fair Pretences, judge for themselves, and boldly declare their Approbation or Disapprobation of what is doing.

This alone is True Liberty; for where Freedom of judging or speaking is a Crime, all other Indulgences are but so many downy Linings. Which at first make the Yoke of Slavery seem soft and easy to be borne, which will wear away, when worn for any Length of Time, and then the rugged galling Load be felt with double Weight.¹

These are powerful words. Cloaked as they are within the seemingly innocuous pages of Eliza Haywood's eighteenth century periodical, *The Female Spectator* (1744-1746), they yet retain force enough to arrest the reader; perhaps it is the resonance of difference they sound against the assumed domesticity of the text that makes them so profound. Such moments of confusion, even shock, are common for the reader of Haywood's periodical. Lulled by a sense of conversational ease, we do not expect to find vehemence, patriotism, or philosophy in the polite discourse of its eidolon, Mrs. Spectator. Still, persistently, compelling, it is there. For twenty-first century feminist scholars, these moments of liberalism, feminism, even radicalism, have made *The Female Spectator* difficult to dismiss, though many have tried. The most successful production of the most prolific professional author of the day, printed in several languages, and popular on both sides of the Atlantic, the periodical still fell short of the longevity and sales enjoyed by its male contemporaries.² Many critics of the nineteenth century made short work of *The Female*

¹ Eliza Haywood, *The Female Spectator*, eds. ed. Kathryn King and Alexander Pettit, in *The Selected Works of Eliza Haywood*, ed. Alexander Pettit, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), 19, II:3, 231. Subsequent references to *The Female Spectator* are to this edition and are included parenthetically in the text by abbreviated title [FS], book number, set number, volume number, and page number.

² For a thorough analysis of *The Female Spectator*'s print and sales history in comparison with its contemporaries, see Patrick Spedding, "Measuring the Success of Haywood's *Female Spectator* (1744-45)" *Fair Philosopher: Elisa Haywood and The Female Spectator*, eds. Lynn Marie Wright and Donald Newman (New Jersey: Assoc. Univ. Press, 2006), 193-211.

Spectator by labeling it a cheap knock-off of Addison and Steele's "superior" attempt, *The Spectator* (1711-1712). Mistaking Haywood's obvious departures from *The Spectator* model as failures, rather than innovations, these early scholars succeeded in silencing *The Female Spectator's* philosophies for more than a century.³

However, when finally reintroduced to critical attention along with many of Haywood's other, long-buried works, *The Female Spectator's* failure to resound with the pointed fervor we've come to expect of "true" feminism relegated it to the stacks of patriarchal propaganda in the eyes of many modern scholars, unsure "whether Haywood is ultimately to be praised or condemned."⁴ Their initial perception of the conservative structure of the periodical blinded them to such potentially subversive assertions as: "[A] brave and honest Mind will be ever firm, constant, and unshaken; it will dare all the Menaces of unwarrantable Power, and despise all undermining Artifices; -- equally Proof against Force or Flattery" -- or, they simply did not read them at all (*FS*19, II:3, 230). They assumed, if they noticed it, that Mrs. Spectator's disgusted denouncement of a soul that "becomes mean and abject; it has no longer any Will, any Inclination of its own; the ready Tool of every soothing Offer, and lowly submissive to every Command that shall be given," can be nothing more than a parroting of some popular sermon against vice and immorality (*FS*19, II:3, 230). But they were, and are, quite wrong. Not only does Haywood vie against the arbitrary power of corrupt government, insisting that her fellow countrymen "examine into the most hidden Motives" of their governors, she is keenly aware of the homologous parallels between family and state -- the subject of tyrannical authority and woman. Though she may suggest throughout *The Female Spectator*, that women are subject to men, she does so not to inure them to their submission, but to shake them into an awareness of their subjection. Often referring to wife as "slave" and to marriage as "yoke," Mrs. Spectator must be aware of the domestic echoes these apparently vague, philosophical statements intone. When she quotes a passage from John Dryden's *Tyrannic Love* (1670), "Danc'd to and fro, and skim'd along the Ground,/ Till to the Magic Circle they were bound," the parallels with Astell's

³ Christine Blouch "What Ann Lang Read': Eliza Haywood and Her Readers," in *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood: Essays on Her Life and Work*, eds. Kirsten T. Saxton and Rebecca P. Bocchicchio (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 300-325.

⁴ Eve Tavor Bannet, "Haywood's Spectator and the female World," in *Fair Philosopher: Eliza Haywood and The Female Spectator*, eds. Lynn Marie Wright and Donald Newman (Massachusetts: Rosemont Publishing Corp, 2006), 101.

“enchanted Circle,” in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Part I* (1697), must likewise resonate.⁵ This dissertation reestablishes the intertextual space through which such parallels become clear.

Up to this point, the recent, energetic scholarship on *The Female Spectator* has focused piecemeal on the many socio-political threads running through its twenty-four total Books. Increasingly brilliant and insightful, these readings highlight everything from the periodical’s conservative endorsement of patriarchy and separate sphere ideology to its subversive stance on politics, freedom of the press, and the fallacy of an essential “sexual nature.” And yet, all of these readings, in one respect or other, come head-to-head with the problem of extrapolating critical analysis from, as Alexander Pettit calls it, “a wildly miscellaneous periodical that was never meant to be read [as one text].” Furthermore, to borrow Pettit’s words, “I would be willing to bet that few Haywoodians have read the work cover to cover”:

Piled one on top the other, the pithy and putatively passing observations of a workaday writer become forbidding, maybe even dull. Less subjectively, they assume a solidity, a “presence,” that contradicts their native status as ephemera.⁶

And yet, in the chapters that follow, I shall argue that it is our lack of a sense for Haywood’s periodical as a “presence” that has defeated our attempts to clearly recapture its impact on the trajectory of feminist consciousness and protofeminist ideology.⁷ That is, an ideology marked, not necessarily by radical, or even direct challenges to patriarchal gender hierarchy, but by a consistent subversion of patriarchal gender constructs, representations, and stereotypes in the interest of women’s welfare and survival. Instead, I suggest a model for approaching *The Female Spectator* capable of addressing the polyvalent whole, rhetorically, spatially, and intertextually. That model is the salon. My conception of the salon as model involves two major aspects: the salon as a model of rhetoric, and the salon as a space in which that rhetoric may be enacted. I derive my rhetorical concept of the salon from Jane Donawerth’s work on conversational rhetoric, in which she argues that the writings of seventeenth-century salonnière,

⁵ John Dryden, *Tyrannic Love* (1670), I.i.95-96, qtd in *The Female Spectator*, 19, II:3, 233; Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Parts I and II*, Patricia Springborg, ed. (Broadview: 2002), I:55.

⁶ Alexander Pettit, “The Pickering & Chatto *Female Spectator*: Nearly Four Pounds of Ephemera, Enshrined,” in *Fair Philosopher*, 42-59.

⁷ In this study, I share the notion of “protofeminist” as indicative of those writers and thinkers whose ideas precede modern feminist concepts, and who lived before the term “feminist” was known, thus forming the groundwork for later and perhaps more “radical” thinking in terms of women’s suffrage, equality, and sexuality.

Madeleine de Scudéry, establish a unique theory of rhetoric through which women claim the right to learning in order to master the “feminine” art of conversation necessary in salon culture.⁸ I see “rhetoric” as Lloyd Bitzer has defined it: as a system of linguistic acts arranged and deployed in the interest of social exigency – that is, an urgent and pressing need that rhetoric both defines and answers.⁹ In this context, however, that exigency is not a specific event or situation, as Bitzer would argue, but a metaphorical one. De Scudéry identified women’s exclusion from intellectual education and from rhetorical training itself as an exigency which salon rhetoric would address. In theorizing the salon as an ideological space, I focus more particularly on the historical structure of the salon, and its mythos in the minds of seventeenth and eighteenth century individuals. As an alternative “public sphere,” the salon’s ideological space imagines women as intellectual beings, and as orators, thus embodying more than a theory of rhetoric alone. The salon as spatial model locates women as subjects within a discourse community of which they may take part, rather than the objects of a discourse from which they are essentially excluded.

These chapters show that – as a rhetorical and spatial enactment of the salon – Eliza Haywood’s *The Female Spectator* is more than the sum of its miscellany parts. When read through Madeleine de Scudéry’s seventeenth-century theory of conversational rhetoric, or salon rhetoric (as I will call it), the periodical’s seeming failures of unity and coherence transform. Instead of demonstrating Haywood’s rhetorical failures, these features identify her text as consistently constructed according to the Scudérian tenets of conversational rhetoric, delineated by Donawerth. The polyvocal nature of conversational rhetoric, as de Scudéry imagines it, holds greater potential for socio-political impact than monologic public speaking because it transforms opposition into discursive partnership. Rather than rely upon classical notions of unity and completion, salon rhetoric assumes the organic, seemingly spontaneous form of a conversation with no beginning and no end – “ephemeral” perhaps, but strategic. Thus, within the space of text, the periodical format – with its various correspondents and *topoi* [topics] – is the perfect

⁸ Jane Donawerth, “Conversation and the Boundaries of Public Discourse in Rhetorical Theory by Renaissance Women,” *Rhetorica* 16 (Spring 1998), 181-199; and, “‘As Becomes a Rational Woman to Speak’ Madeleine de Scudéry’s Rhetoric of Conversation,” in *Listening to Their Voices: The Rhetorical Activities of Historical Women* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 305-319. Donawerth develops this argument in two separate articles.

⁹ Lloyd F. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation.” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 1 (January 1968), 1-14.

equivalent. Not only does Haywood enact de Scudéry's salon rhetoric within her production, she recreates a textual representation of salon culture itself. As a spatial evocation of the salon, *The Female Spectator* becomes a nexus for intertextual conversation with a number of ideologically and philosophically formative texts of the period. Inviting innovation and giving voice to new ideas, the periodical salon weighs, reflects, and ponders those texts to which it owes so much of its form, structure, and philosophy, acknowledging their strengths, and cleverly revising their weaknesses in an underlying discussion about the physical and intellectual lives of women. This dissertation retraces and recreates this polyvalence.

Chapter One considers *The Female Spectator* as an act of salon rhetoric through which the periodical maintains persuasive continuity on a number of levels – most importantly, on the level of profeminist pedagogy, that is, teaching women to reflect upon patriarchal gender politics. Using Donawerth's analysis of Madeleine de Scudéry's theory of conversational rhetoric that promotes the space of the salon as a persuasive platform for socio-political change, I suggest that Haywood's adherence to Scudérian salon rhetoric is subversive, even as it pretends to conform. Conversational rhetoric presented a feminine – and, I argue, a heterosocial – answer to masculine public speech. As historian Stephen Kale notes, the salons of de Scudéry's time (and in the eighteenth century to follow) created an extension of the Enlightenment 'Republic of Letters' – a space for dialogue between scientists, politicians, and philosophers in which women could not only participate, but also dominate by the mastery of conversation.¹⁰ In reading Haywood's periodical as a textual salon, I do not see – as many have suggested – an impenetrably commercial miscellany of intentionally unconnected parts. Instead, I see a strategic deployment of de Scudéry's principles for good – and persuasive – conversation. No matter her *topoi* [Greek: topics], Haywood's eidolon, Mrs. Spectator, always returns to one subject: women and women's welfare. Her digressions into popular themes, entertaining tales, and "Lucubrations"¹¹ follow a distinctively Scudérian pattern of discourse in which the speaker must make her own agenda secondary to what may be immediately passing. Her patience and

¹⁰ Steven D. Kale, *French salons: high society and political sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

¹¹ Mrs. Spectator refers to her essays as "Lucubrations," meaning, "The product of nocturnal study and meditation; hence, a literary work showing signs of careful elaboration. Now somewhat derisive or playful, suggesting the notion of something pedantic or over-elaborate" (OED). Although the term was applied in *The Tatler* No. 70 (1709), both *Tatler* and *Spectator* seem to have favored the terms "essay" and "lecture" to describe their periodicals.

cleverness in steering the conversation, and in winning the ear of her company, however, promise ultimate success.

Chapter Two transfers the rhetorical significance of the salon to the question of ideological space. Building upon a Habermasian concept of the “public sphere,” and more recent notions of multiple public spheres, I consider the heterosocial salon space of *The Female Spectator* against the homosocial coffeehouse space of Addison and Steele’s *The Spectator*. A self-styled “imitation” of *The Spectator*’s periodical, *The Female Spectator* nevertheless establishes itself as distinctly different from its more Juvenalian predecessor (*FS1*, II:2, 17). Haywood’s spatial preference for the salon rather than the coffeehouse so romanticized as Mr. Spectator’s “Element,” suggests a subtle rejection of the exclusive masculinity exuded by the coffeehouse, and its androcentric discourse.¹² While *The Spectator* indeed promises the women of the “tea-table” a secret peek into coffeehouse conversation, and addresses them as valued beneficiaries of Mr. Spectator’s “particular care,” women remain outsiders looking in, and more often than not, listening to themselves and their “follies” unstintingly abused (*S92*, 2:289). Instead of taking part in the discourse among men, female readers of *The Spectator* must both accept, and deny, their position as the objects of male scrutiny and desire – and adversaries to their idealized spaces of male discourse. Conversely, as spatial salon *The Female Spectator* refuses all adversarial positions, inviting compassion among women themselves, and between women and men. Rather than address them as objects of satire and scrutiny, Mrs. Spectator converses with her female readers as individual subjects within systems of social control that necessarily limit their agency. Eschewing the dichotomous arguments and Theophrastian (didactic stereotype) characters of coffeehouse satire, the discourse of the salon nourishes connectivity through sentimental narrative in the interest of persuasion. Thus, as Eve Tavor Bannet suggests,

Exploring this intertextual space makes it apparent that Enlightenment feminist writers inhabited a complex discursive world where diverse feminist and patriarchal agendas were articulated upon one another and where different voices

¹² Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator, with illustrative notes...*, ed. Robert Bisset, 8 vols. (London: British Library, 1799), 49, 2:90. Subsequent references are to this edition and will be cited by abbreviated title [*S*], issue, volume, and page number.

were both joined and divided by the “same” words, the “same” ideals, and the “same” representations, often attaching different meanings to the same lexes.¹³

Therefore, the salon space of *The Female Spectator* signals a fundamental change in representation, in which all parallel discourse between Haywood’s periodical and *The Spectator* must be reconsidered.

Chapters Three and Four build upon the previous chapters’ exploration of *The Female Spectator* as rhetorical and spatial salon in order to pursue the polyvalent threads between *The Female Spectator* and its philosophically and narratively formative predecessors. For, as salon, the periodical becomes an explorative space through which to reconsider and revise that which has gone before. Chapter Three examines the dialogue between *The Female Spectator* and Haywood’s own sensational amatory novel, *Love in Excess*. Haywood’s attempt to revisit and refine the successes and possible failures of her earliest work reveals, not her own “moral reform” – as early critics have suggested – but her continuous interest in the reform of socio-sexual politics.¹⁴ Throughout her periodical, Haywood and her many narrative voices, Mrs Spectator, Mira, the Widow, Euphrosine, and many correspondents, reinvent the scenes of *Love in Excess* in new and more persuasive ways, alerting women and men alike to the dangers of the sexual double standard, and the politics of sex, love, and marriage. Within the books of *The Female Spectator*, proto-feminist consciousness moves from the space of amatory boudoir and into the space of the salon, where its poignancy and potential impact are unburied at last from beneath the blanket of forbidden romance. Moreover, by transforming the amatory narrative into salon conversation, Haywood successfully detaches the body of her narrator, Mrs. Spectator, from the sexualized body of the amatory seductress.

Finally, Chapter Four unburies the thread of Haywood’s polyvalent engagement with “England’s first feminist” Mary Astell and her *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, I & II* (1696-7) and *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* (1700). I argue that Haywood invites the proto-feminist agenda of Astell’s seventeenth-century monologic essays into the space of the feminocentric, but essentially heterosocial, salon as a respected voice in an on-going discussion of gender politics.

¹³ Eve Tavor Bannet, *The Domestic Revolution: Enlightenment Feminisms and the Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 50.

¹⁴ I’m using “socio-sexual politics” here, and hereafter, to indicate the real social manifestations attendant upon a belief in essential sexual difference, such as the “sexual double standard” for example, and which carry serious (though often unacknowledged) political consequences.

In this way, the periodical successfully extracts Astell's powerful call for female education and relational autonomy from what had become a religiously and politically charged text. Perceived as impinging upon the masculine preserve of monologic argument, and intractably oppositional in nature, Astell's treatises – though persuasive to many – ultimately elicited hesitance in her supporters, and ridicule in her opponents, even as they (often) plagiarized her ideas. True to the nature of the salon, however, Haywood's periodical remains relatively secular, deemphasizing religious dogma, even as it maintains the Christian conservative rhetoric so appealing to eighteenth century readers, and so applauded by Astell herself fifty years before. *The Female Spectator's* dedication to pragmatic solutions for women makes her conversational style of argument ultimately more effective for a broader audience, yet blinded by our own twenty-first century preference for assertive, authoritative feminist expression, we mistake Haywood's periodical as somehow *less* conservative, because it is *more* "agreeable."

But, Haywood is neither a mindless promoter of separate sphere ideology, nor an incendiary feminist radical; as salonnière, either position precludes open discussion. She is, however, passionately interested in the agency of her fellow women, and the partnership of men in that endeavor. "[T]ill we can pluck up the Spirit to assert the Dignity of our Natures, and of ourselves," and "throw off those senseless Avocations" that inevitably convert the best of women into a "pretty Play-thing," she writes, women will ever be subject to the intolerable restraint, and intellectual neglect, of men (*FS12*, II:2,418-419). Compelling sentiments such as these locate Haywood, and *The Female Spectator*, as an early and integral player in the feminist consciousness-raising of the long eighteenth century in England and America. Approaching her text through the model of the salon illuminates that role.

CHAPTER ONE: “A PART IN CONVERSATION”: ELIZA HAYWOOD’S FEMALE SPECTATOR AND THE RHETORIC OF THE SALON

*May her first writings be forgotten, and the last survive to do her honour!*¹

So says Sophronia of Eliza Haywood and *The Female Spectator*, in Clara Reeve’s *The Progress of Romance* (1785). In characteristically friendly, “feminine” dialogue about female novelists, Reeve’s characters reinvent Haywood as an author whose later devotion “to the service of virtue” arose from a wish to “recover a lost reputation” and “atone for her errors” (1:121). This scenario, perhaps inspired by David Erskine Baker’s kind treatment of Haywood’s career in his *Biographica Dramatica; or, A Companion to the Playhouse* (1782),² spurred what scholars such as Paula Backscheider have called “the Story” of Haywood’s reform from amatory scandal novelist, to status-quo conduct book writer – a story critics today universally reject. Instead, Haywood scholars rationalize her so-called “bipolar career” in a number of different ways, some suggesting that she was a savvy professional driven by popular taste, turning her subversive energies away from seduction, and towards a coded politics,³ others that she decided it was simply more important to “impress women with the precariousness of their position in the social order.”⁴ None, however, seem ready to credit Reeve’s fiction of Haywood’s moral reform.

And yet, in arguing so convincingly for Haywood as a “committed – often angry– social commentator,” few critics seem to consider the most prominent work in figuring her as

¹ Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance, through Times, Countries, Manners; with Remarks on the Good and Bad Effects of It, on Them Respectively; in a Course of Evening Conversations*, 2 vols. (Colchester, 1785), 1:122. Subsequent references the text are to this edition, and will be cited in parentheses by volume and page number.

² David Erskine Baker, *Biographica Dramatica; or, A Companion to the Playhouse*, 2 vols. (London: Becket and Dehondt, 1764).

³ For intriguing discussions on Haywood’s politics in *The Female Spectator*, see Kathryn King, “Patriot of Opportunist? Eliza Haywood and the Politics of *The Female Spectator*,” in *Fair Philosopher: Eliza Haywood and The Female Spectator*, eds. Lynn Marie Wright and Donald Newman (New Jersey: Assoc. Univ. Press, 2006), 104-121; Earla Wilputte, “‘Too ticklish to meddle with’: The Silencing of *The Female Spectator*’s Political Correspondents,” in *Fair Philosopher*, 22-140.

⁴ Lynn Marie Wright and Donald J. Newman, Introduction to *Fair Philosopher*, 13-41.

irrefutably “reformed” in the eyes of Reeve, or Baker: *The Female Spectator*.⁵ Arguing convincingly for Haywood’s subversive feminism, they are nevertheless reluctant to situate *The Female Spectator* within the context of those proto-feminist authors with whom her periodical must have shared shelf-room. Only Eve Tavor Bannett, in her 2006 article, “Haywood’s Spectator and the Female World,” seems to have noted – and asserted – Haywood’s systematic relationship with contemporary feminists of the period.⁶ Indeed, it would seem that Haywood’s many apparently conservative views – both political and social – have made it difficult for scholars to argue comfortably for *The Female Spectator*’s proto-feminism in the company of women like Mary Astell, Ann Finch, or Mary Chudleigh, whose outspoken resentment of sexual politics seems to have trumped their otherwise conservative leanings. And perhaps more forbidding to such a project, even the general editor of the six-volume *Selected Works of Eliza Haywood* (2001), Alexander Pettit, has characterized *The Female Spectator* as an “ephemeral” behemoth.⁷ For Pettit, the fact that the complete *Female Spectator*’s print history after 1775 (the final Book was completed in 1746) contains lengthy stops, starts, and loose attention to the original⁸ constitutes evidence that the periodical itself was never intended as a production for posterity. Indeed, in “The Pickering & Chatto *Female Spectator*: Nearly Four Pounds of Ephemera, Enshrined,” Pettit expresses anxiety over misrepresenting a publication, expressly intended to be consumed in brief intervals over the span of two years, by printing it as one text in a critical edition. Such a “generically diffuse” and “thematically miscellaneous” text, Pettit suggests, resists the attempts of its present-day scholars to “impose coherency” upon it. Moreover, he explains that “[r]adical fragmentation defines *The Female Spectator* stemmatically as well as formally,” because its “textual genealogy is itself chaotic: mixed sets, partial sets, and sets of uncertain vintage and provenance abound” (44-45). Its appearance in “commercial rather than formal or thematic” monthly books, he argues, suggests that the material itself was never intended to be read in one sitting – and that perhaps Haywood herself never imagined the

⁵ Wright and Newman, Introduction to *Fair Philosopher*, 20.

⁶ Eve Tavor Bannet, “Haywood’s Spectator and the female World,” in *Fair Philosopher*, 82-103.

⁷ Alexander Pettit, “The Pickering & Chatto *Female Spectator*: Nearly Four Pounds of Ephemera, Enshrined,” in *Fair Philosopher*, 42-59. Subsequent references to this article will be cited in parentheses by page number.

⁸Patrick, Spedding “Measuring the Success of Haywood’s *Female Spectator* (1744-46),” in *Fair Philosopher*, 193-211. Spedding provides a detailed investigation into *The Female Spectator*’s genealogy of publication, and an interesting analysis of its sales and popularity.

possibility that her periodical might be collected into a single unit and preserved for readers of later generations (50).

I think this unlikely, however. Haywood's "commercial" aspirations clearly take for a model Addison and Steele's *The Spectator*, which was an unprecedented periodical success marked by its collection into volume form for later sale. It may be overreaching to suggest that Haywood planned out *The Female Spectator* in detail as one text (such as a novel), but quite reasonable to suppose that she had a vision for the periodical as a whole – and hopes that it might one day follow *The Spectator* into collected editions wherein that vision might be more apparent.⁹ As for *The Female Spectator*'s "chaotic" print genealogy: such is the sad history of publication for many female authors before the twentieth century, not because their authors' designed their works for disposal, but because the productions – and entertainments – of women rarely excited the same respect as that of their male counterparts. *The Female Spectator*'s seemingly "illogical" format and its struggle for continued existence demonstrates its uncertain and time-bound status as a woman's text, but it does not follow that its conception was equally uncertain.

Instead, we should consider that our notions of a unified text, narrative, or philosophy, are drawn from those forms privileged – and claimed by – men in the eighteenth century. Generally unsuccessful at gaining public respect – or even training – in such forms, women writers frequently opted for alternative avenues when forwarding their views: conversation and dialogue.¹⁰ Rejecting the "masculine" style of monologic public discourse, with its strict respect for unity in forwarding the rhetor's aim, the "feminine" conversational rhetor respects her audience's enjoyment and participation as a deciding factor in the arrangement of her material. Therefore, I suggest that when we accuse *The Female Spectator* of failing to maintain "[t]he blend of variousness and coherency" evident in its predecessors, like *The Spectator*, we

⁹ I'm thinking, for example, of Charles Dickens' career as periodicalist and novelist. It should also be noted that Haywood's rapid publication schedule indicates that even her novels were written during the process of publication, as the first volume might appear in print while the second or third volumes were in the process of completion.

¹⁰ Karen Bloom Gervirtz, "Ladies Reading and Writing: Eighteenth-Century Women Writers and the Gendering of Critical Discourse," in *Modern Language Studies* 33 (Spring-Autumn 2003), 60-72. Gervirtz explains that eighteenth century Englishwomen who attempted to enter literary discourse as critics (specifically of Shakespeare) achieved praise or success only if they did so in distinctly "feminine" modes. She notes that those women who chose to publish criticism deploying the authoritatively "masculine" modes were ridiculed or ignored.

anachronistically misapply rules of rhetoric popularized – standardized – by and for the male author (Pettit, 47). In order to conceive of Haywood’s *Female Spectator* in the variant coherence of its own time and space, we must use a theory of rhetoric suited to her sex and moment; for as feminist philosopher Loraine Code argues, the “sex of the knower” is epistemologically and rhetorically significant within a social context in which sex has political meaning.¹¹ She emphasizes that,

[t]hroughout the history of western philosophy there is a demonstrable alignment between the ideals of autonomous reason and the ideals of masculinity. That alignment suppresses and even denigrates values and attributes long associated with ‘the feminine’ at the same time and in the same way as it devalues epistemic dependence in the name of cognitive self-reliance. (117)

However, in recognizing the historically gendered nature of reason, and by extension, rhetoric, Code insists that so-called “feminine values,” are highly contentious as such. In suggesting that we examine *The Female Spectator* according to a correspondingly “feminine” system of rhetoric, I am not suggesting that there exists an essential *female rhetoric* – on the contrary. As Code notes, such characteristics are far more likely those which have been strongly encouraged in women “throughout a long history of oppression and exploitation” (17). To turn around and make those characteristics valuable is laudable, but unlikely to end female oppression. Nonetheless, for female authors of eighteenth-century Britain, the paradigm was conversational rhetoric, their model, as I shall show, the salon.

The Scudérian Salon: Modeling “Feminine” Conversational Rhetoric

Between 1642 and 1684, French gentlewoman Madeleine de Scudéry published several works that, as Jane Donawerth argues, “revised classical rhetorical theory” by supplanting men’s experience as public speakers, with women’s experiences, creating a “tradition of women’s rhetoric.”¹² Donawerth’s assessment of de Scudéry as a rhetorical theorist and her recognition

¹¹Lorraine Code, *What Can She Know?: Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 10. Subsequent references to this source will be cited in parentheses by page number.

¹²Jane Donawerth, “Conversation and the Boundaries of Public Discourse in Rhetorical Theory by Renaissance Women,” *Rhetorica*, 181-183. Donawerth reads the work of Madeleine de Scudéry, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Margaret Fell, and Mary Astell in terms of

of conversation as a platform for renaissance feminist argument provide a construct with which to examine the importance of conversational modes for later protofeminist authors. According to Donawerth, de Scudéry's works, especially *Les Femmes Illustres or the Heroick Harangues of the Illustrious Women* (1642) and *Conversations Sur Divers Sujets, Conversations Upon Several Subjects* (1680), "[develop] a theory of rhetoric and composition" which encompasses "conversation, the art of speaking, raillery, invention, and letter writing" ("Rational Woman," 305). In her many essay dialogues, de Scudéry circumvents the assumption that women need no training in rhetoric (because they cannot speak in public) by arguing that women need training in conversation. Moreover, de Scudéry presents the French salon as the model and venue for such necessary rhetorical discourse, arguing that the discourse of the salon possesses greater potential for socio-political efficacy than public discourse. As Donawerth explains:

In aristocratic salon society fueled by the favor of an absolute monarch, private conversation might very well garner more power than speech in public forums. [...] Opting for consensus rather than debate and argument, de Scudéry further revises the tradition she inherits, adapting it to the circumstances of women's participation and salon culture. ("Conversation," 187)

In *Conversations Upon Several Subjects*, de Scudéry's topics are wide-ranging, depending upon *kairos* [Greek: opportunity, timeliness]: "what colors of cloth best suit one's complexion and how well one's children are doing, as well as gallantry and science" (qtd. in "Conversation," 187). Thus, Donawerth argues, de Scudéry's "rhetoric of conversation pragmatically acknowledges the importance of these 'private' venues for power" ("Conversation," 188).

Hosted from the space of the feminine domestic sphere, the Scudérian salon gathering lulls its attendees into a sense of comfort, free from political attack. Thus, the salonnière hijacks the political sphere, subverting the imaginary boundaries between private and public, and reinserting female voices into intellectual and political discourse by bringing political and intellectual men into close contact with women who would be otherwise restricted from such company.¹³ The domestic space becomes an arena for a highly Sophistic style of rhetorical

their individual contributions to theorizing feminine conversational rhetoric. As they outline their theories, she argues, these women simultaneously suggest that mastery of such rhetoric is necessary for gentlewomen, thus justifying women's education in rhetoric despite their exclusion from public speaking.

¹³ Carolyn Lougee, *Le Paradis des Femmes: women, salons, and social stratification in seventeenth-century France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976). Carolyn Lougee

exchange where fashion and “news” may be the topics of the moment, but “feminine literary expression” and socio-political advancement are at stake.¹⁴ According to Steven Kale, salonnières were certainly great practitioners of their own form of social composition, as well as masters of conversation. The salonnière was indeed the “author” of her own salon, which was itself “an act of self-expression” (22), in its “delicate balance between exclusivity and openness, between ‘inclusions and exclusions’” (9). “[I]n the Age of Reason,” Kale writes, salons like those idealized by de Scudéry, “focused and reflected enlightened public opinion by facilitating the exchange of news and ideas” (2). Here, “public and private spheres overlapped,” because the aristocratic women who orchestrated them were the “center of a family’s public responsibilities” (9). However, de Scudéry’s model of the salon, in which socio-political power dangles at the tip of a tongue, did not necessarily represent the norm but rather an ideal particularly important for her to construct – since so much of her own, and her brother’s, social advancement depended on their success in salon conversation. De Scudéry was an important figure in the salon’s inception as an early member of the very first salon circle in existence in the 1640’s and 1650’s, which in turn became a model for the next two centuries, and she went on to found her own salon (*la société du Samedi*) under the pseudonym of Sappho.¹⁵ Thus, de Scudéry had much to gain from theorizing salon rhetoric – both in its opportunity for social advancement, and in its potential to circumvent the stigma against women’s formal education. According to Donawerth, de Scudéry’s collection of harangues by noted classical women appropriates the classical and renaissance periods themselves, transforming them into a nostalgic past where women had the right – the duty – to master the rhetoric of conversation and letter-writing. By drawing upon such precedent,¹⁶ as Catherine Gallagher might say, de Scudéry masks what might otherwise appear radical by claiming that to rhetorically train women for the salon is in fact a tradition.

has argued that the seventeenth century French salon was a female-centered space that offered both sexes potential social mobility.

¹⁴ Steven D. Kale, *French salons: high society and political sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 2. Subsequent references to this source will be cited in parentheses by page number.

¹⁵ Ros Ballaster, “1: The Rise of the Novel: Gender and Genre in Theories of Prose Fiction,” in *Seductive Forms: Women’s Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 44.

¹⁶ Catherine Gallagher, “A History of the Precedent: Rhetorics of Legitimation in Women’s Writing,” *Critical Inquiry* 26 (Winter 2000), 309-327. Gallagher examines the use of precedent

But for de Scudéry, training women in conversational rhetoric is not only as traditional as training men in public discourse, it is a superior tradition to public discourse. Donawerth claims that de Scudéry goes so far as to “denigrate” male public (political) speech as “self-aggrandizing, and oppressive” (“Conversation,” 190). The superiority of the private *cabinet*, or salon, over the public forum is a major theme in *Les Femmes Illustres*. De Scudéry’s female characters depict the two forms as approaching the same end in opposite ways: within the salon, a community of voices may discuss and negotiate, while the public forum allowed only one speaker at a time to seek absolute victory over another. Thus, through the dialogues of her female characters, de Scudéry’s rhetorical theory denigrates masculine public speech and promotes feminine conversational dialogue as a more effective means of influencing the public – and private – sphere. “‘Exordes, Narrationes, Epilogues’ [...] reflect men’s minds and the artificial excesses of masculine education” (“Rational Woman,” 307), she argues in *Conversations*, and are inferior because they “only speak strictly according to the exigency of their Affairs”¹⁷ (qtd. in “Rational Woman,” 309). On the other hand, salon rhetoric is “the bond of all humane society [...] and the most ordinary means of introducing into the World, not only Politeness, but also the purest Morals, and the love of Glory and Vertue” (qtd. in “Rational Woman,” 309). Donawerth argues that this notion of “speech as civilizing” can be found in Cicero’s public oratory, but that de Scudéry’s combination of civilizing speech with conversation reintroduces the concept to its Sophistic origins. For de Scudéry, and the Sophists, “pleasure [is] the central goal of speech” (“Rational Woman,” 309). It is no coincidence that Haywood’s Mrs. Spectator often portrays the private interactions of politicians as more definitive than their public voices.¹⁸ I think it safe to say that Haywood, too, values the power of pleasurable, private conversation over public speech. Without pleasure, there is only argument.

Radical as some of these claims may seem for the seventeenth-century, de Scudéry manages to couch her more “revolutionary” points within a conservative shell. Donawerth notes

in women’s writing as a means of legitimating their arguments. She notes that women writers often sought precedents for their sociopolitical rights in Biblical and ancient history.

¹⁷ Madeleine de Scudéry, *Les Femmes Illustres or the Heroick Harangues of the Illustrious Women*, trans. James Innes (1650; Edinburgh: Brown, Glen and Weir, 1681); Madeleine de Scudéry, *Conversations Upon Several Subjects in two toms*, trans. Ferrand Spence (1680; London: H. Rhodes, 1683).

¹⁸ For an example of Haywood’s emphasis of the private actions of public individuals, see *The Female Spectator*, 3, II:2:102.

that “[s]he aims to appropriate rhetoric for women as a means to political power,” yet she does so by presenting her ideas through fictional dialogues between notable ancient Greek women. Their discussions are held within the private sphere, rather than as public orations. Furthermore, to appropriate classical icons for women would have been “safely nostalgic” in the wake of “empiricism and Cartesian rationalism” which were engrossing intellectual men at the time (“Rational Woman,” 306). Ultimately, de Scudéry avoids the stigma of calling for a “revolution” in women’s education by claiming that her agenda is actually a “reformation” – a revival of a more glorious past that the seventeenth-century French salon can realize. Of course, as Donawerth points out, the ancient women of de Scudéry’s harangues likely enjoyed fewer rights and freedoms than herself (the Greeks placed women alongside slaves in excluding them from citizenship and public speaking). Nonetheless, the effect of her tactic is to make the progressive appear quite traditional, after all.

Thus, de Scudéry’s vision of the salon space, and women’s rhetorical place within it, forms the ideal model through which to read Eliza Haywood’s *The Female Spectator*. Both women claim pleasure and entertainment as their ostensible motive for writing, while simultaneously – like the salonnière herself – orchestrating a discursive situation through which women may claim autonomy, agency, and the right to an intellectual existence. Indeed, Haywood’s lifelong interest in French culture as a model for Englishwomen would suggest that she had a Scudérian salon very much at heart when conceiving her periodical project.¹⁹ Like de Scudéry, Haywood’s is a strategically conservative platform, imbedding progressively proto-feminist views within a traditional formula that attempts to persuade men that a liberal attitude toward women is not only traditional but serves their own interest. Driven by her arguably Tory political worldview, in which playing politics means operating within the boundaries of hereditary aristocratic rule, Haywood would have admired de Scudéry’s prescription for winning the hearts and minds of dominant group from within. And, as her periodical originally appeared in monthly installments, it is not so far-fetched to imagine each Book as the regular gathering of

¹⁹ Lifelong, or at least career-long. Haywood’s first novel, *Love in Excess* (1720), takes place in Paris, and features a French heroine who reads LaFontenelle’s *Discourse concerning the Plurality of Worlds* (1686) and displays her mastery of conversational rhetoric. Furthermore, Mrs. Spectator and her correspondents reference the intellectualism and socialization of Frenchwomen as superior to that of Englishwomen throughout *The Female Spectator* (1744-6). For a full discussion, see my Chapter 3.

a textual salon. I shall argue that *The Female Spectator* reproduces and deploys those crucial aspects of Scudérian conversational rhetoric as what Kathryn Shevelow calls a “reading situation for women,” a reading situation that unifies the whole:²⁰ the text advances a polyvalent discussion in lieu of monologic argument; the atmosphere follows the “agreeable” ideal rather than opposition, inviting multiple views and answers to the subject at hand; and finally, as I will demonstrate through a sustained analysis of a travel narrative, the subjects follow a Scudérian sense of *kairos* in which the flow of *topoi* appears natural, timely, and audience-centered. The result is a rhetorical salon in which the entertainment of the company appears to trump the agenda of the salonnière; and yet, the arrangement, the *topoi*, and the company, are all careful constructions of her invention – even that which is carefully left unsaid.

Thus, after the rhetorical tradition set down by de Scudéry, Haywood’s particular use of the periodical form as a nexus of polite – and intriguing – conversation constructs an effective persuasive discourse on behalf of male/female intellectual equality, female agency and survival within a patriarchal system. Moreover, for an eighteenth-century author like Haywood, de Scudéry’s model of the salon and salon rhetoric, in which “feminine” conversational rhetoric trumps the bombast of statesman and politician alike, is a natural cohesive structure of choice. Based upon a positive revision of Sophistic style, salon rhetoric takes as its basic principle that of making the art of argument so communal that it appears natural – spontaneous (“Conversation,” 187). For a periodical that hopes to entertain as well as influence its public, such a structure would appear far more appealing to both author and audience. In *The Female Spectator*, Haywood manipulates her audience into accepting the modest, apolitical image of Mrs. Spectator that best suits her agenda: to forward female interest, yet attain the respect and longevity that Clara Reeve’s characters project for her. Within the discourse of de Scudéry’s “feminine” conversation, Mrs. Spectator’s experiential authority, anecdotal narrative, varied correspondence, and moralistic claims *unify* Haywood’s periodical as a text subtly pressing for female education, reflection, and intellectualism without jeopardizing the approval of conservative male and female audiences. Like the salonnière, Haywood exerts the “power to achieve the right mix,” in this, the ultimate expression of her artistry (Kale, 22).

²⁰Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and print culture: the construction of femininity in the early periodical* (London: Routledge, 1989), 16.

The Female Spectator: A Textual Salon

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. One correspondent, Philenia, represents this attitude. Referring to like conversations in two earlier books, one by Mrs. Spectator herself on the "Mis-use of Time" and one by Cleora on female education, Philenia claims to be inspired to join the discourse these previous voices have begun. In her letter, she proposes that men in England might "take the same Methods of instructing us [women] as they do in France," as a balance between a serious institutional education for young women in "the most abstruse Sciences," and educating them in nothing at all – the current mode in England. She particularly favors the French custom of education, because her three years experience in France showed her the effects of it upon her own sex. Not only were women highly respected in general, their conversational rhetoric made such regard their due. She explains:

they so well deserved [this respect], by their most agreeable Manner of Conversation: Besides that easy Freedom, which is the Essence of good Breeding, I discovered, even among very young Ladies, a Skill in Philosophy, Geography, and other Sciences [... while] we in England know little beyond our Music-Books and Dancing... (*FS12*, II:2, 416)

She goes on to describe the intellectual life of French salon culture, where "all Men of Learning, Wit, and Genius, have [...] free Access to the Ladies" at all social and domestic engagements, exposing the women to the scholarship and philosophy of the day, and allowing them to hone their conversational skill (*FS12*, II:2, 416). Equally important, Philenia notes, these conversations are far from "Pedantry" wherein one might "consider herself as with her Tutor – On the contrary, all they say is a continual round of Gaiety and sprightly Wit; yet is their very Raillery on such Subjects, as mingle Information with Delight." She claims to have learned more "by a single Sentence laugh'd out, than by a formal, stiff pedantick Harangue of an Hour

long” (FS12, II:2, 417). Her depiction of salon discourse could not be closer to de Scudéry’s model than if she quoted directly from the pages of *Conversations*, and is quite accurate of actual salons during the period. As Kale suggests, the salons were regarded as “academies” and “universities” unto themselves, and the only opportunities for women to exercise their intellect (28). Naturally, Philenia’s ultimate desire is to continue such an atmosphere at home, and “to make a Part in Conversation on all sorts of Subjects.” “Why, dear Female Spectator,” she pleads, “is it not so with us?” (FS12, II:2, 417). Mrs. Spectator’s response is perhaps as much of a message to the other half of her readership, as it is to Philenia. “Our Fathers, our Brothers, our Husbands are, perhaps, more tenacious of the Honour of their Family than they need to be,” she says, calling the behavior of patriarchal Englishmen “phlegmatic,” “A Piece of Cruelty,” and hyper-suspicious of the “Females belonging to them” (FS12, II:2, 418). Her response also suggests that if Englishwomen are prevented from enjoying a heterosexual salon culture in every day life, then the obvious solution is to do so in print.

Haywood’s salon begins in a similarly conservative package as de Scudéry’s *Les Femmes Illustres* and *Conversations*. Introducing her eidolon, Mrs. Spectator, as sister to Addison and Steele’s Mr. Spectator of the popular periodical, *The Spectator* (1711), furthers an apparently conservative object, for Mr. Spectator saw female “reform” in a decidedly conservative light:

A Woman’s Character is contained in Domestick Life: she is Blameable or Praise-worthy as her carriage affects the House of her Father or her Husband. All she has to do in this world, is contained within the duties of a Daughter, a Sister, a Wife, and a Mother...when they consider themselves, as they ought, not other than an additional part of the Species (for their own Happiness and comfort, as well as that of those for whom they were born) their Ambition to excel will be directed accordingly.²¹

When in her first Book Mrs. Spectator introduces herself “in imitation of my learned Brother of ever precious Memory” [Mr. Spectator], Haywood’s persona implies a similar aim (FS1, II:2, 17).²² For critics like Shawn Lisa Maurer, who sees the “discursive mode [as] conventionally

²¹ Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator, with illustrative notes...*, 342, 5:271.

²² Patricia Meyer Spacks, in her notes to *The Selections from The Female Spectator*, suggests that the phrase “of ever precious Memory” is “conventionally used with reference to the dead,” 7. Kathryn King, in her notes to the Pickering & Chatto edition of *The Female Spectator*, suggests that the Female Spectator’s reference to the Spectator as “brother” indicates her membership in the late Addison and Steele’s “fraternity of Spectators” (S10, 1:45), rather than a familial relationship, FS1, II:2, 446 n. 1.

designated an exclusively masculine prerogative,” Haywood has not only aligned herself with her “learned Brother,” she has appropriated his authority:²³ “Lacking feminine gender identity as defined through traditional affiliations to men, the narrator, whose relation to men is uniquely discursive, can function as the absent male in the *Female Spectator* family” (217). Going so far as to liken Haywood’s eidolon to *The Tatler*’s (1709) Isaac Bickerstaff, Maurer views Haywood as reifying Addison and Steele’s agenda for the promotion of patriarchal privilege in both the public and private sphere. For Maurer, Haywood constructs a text in which women are powerless to do anything other than warn or sympathize (215). On the contrary, however, the “discursive mode” is not a male preserve, nor does Haywood’s brief gesture establish her predecessor as her rhetorical model. In fact, as Pettit notes, “although mention of this genealogy is standard fare in accounts of *The Female Spectator*, the differences between the two periodicals are considerable” (47).

Haywood’s use of *The Spectator* is therefore a rhetorical gesture, playing upon the *The Spectator*’s now-classic status as standard reading for modest young women, rather than an accurate description of her own aims – just as de Scudéry cleverly coded her own feminist innovations as patriarchal Classics. Using the popular reformist jargon of the time, directed at curbing “Promiscuous Diversions” and “[teaching] every one to regulate their [Affairs],” Haywood solidifies a sense of traditional values through her “salonnières” – as I will call the members of Mrs. Spectator’s editorial club, after the hostesses of the French salons (*FS1*, II:2, 18). These four women appear to reflect Mr. Spectator’s four domestic states of female “duty” exactly: “a Daughter, a Sister, a Wife, and a Mother.” Mrs. Spectator herself is a “sister” to Mr. Spectator, while Mira is identified as “married to a Gentleman every way worthy of so excellent a Wife.” Next, Mrs. Spectator includes “a Widow of Quality.” Her presence is an interesting addition to Addison’s patriarchal representation, since the widow’s status implies the absence of a man; however, the Widow, we learn, is also a “mother.” And finally, completing the group, “the Daughter of a wealthy Merchant, charming as an Angel” whom Mrs. Spectator calls Euphrosine (*FS1*, II:2, 18-19). These four women form Haywood’s conservative base in much the same way that classical characters served de Scudéry. By merging these figures “as several

²³ Shawn Lisa Maurer, *Proposing Men: dialectics of gender and class in the eighteenth-century English periodical* (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 216. Subsequent references to this source will be cited in parentheses by page number.

Members of one Body” of which Mrs. Spectator is “the Mouth,” Haywood establishes a comfortable platform from within the status quo (*FS1*, II:2, 19). But as a group of women, *The Female Spectator* coterie shares a much stronger situational relationship with the salonnières – particularly the first group of seventeenth-century women, known as the *Précieuses*, whose collaboration and apprenticeship between elder and younger established the tradition for passing their skills to the next generation of women (Kale, 21).

The gesture is also significantly indicative of one of the steps necessary for women to reclaim spaces of authority. As Code notes, a woman must free herself from stereotypes and assumptions about her capabilities, and create a space where her authority will be respected. The ability to do so depends, Code says, on “the collective and mutually enabling efforts of women who can trust themselves to know, and to know that they know” (215-216). This community thus works as a reaffirming body, in which a woman’s perceptions of reality are confirmed. When in doubt, she can check her impressions against the impressions of others, whose willingness to validate her provides the foundation for her authority – and indeed, Code adds, her sanity (216). In *The Female Spectator*, not only have her fellow salonnières “approved [Mrs. Spectator’s] Design,” and “assur’d [her] of all the Help they could afford,” they also support each other in democratic, check and balance fashion (*FS1*, II:2, 19). “When first myself and Assistants set about this Undertaking,” writes Mrs. Spectator, “we agreed to lay down certain Rules to be observed among us, in order to preserve Harmony, which is necessary should exist in all Societies.” Instrumental to this harmonious preserve, is the negotiation governing the composition of the periodical itself:

In the first of these Meetings we communicate to each other what Intelligence we receive, and consider on what Topicks we shall proceed. – In the second, we lay our several Productions on the Table, which being read over, every one has the Liberty of excepting against, or censuring whatever she disapproves; nothing being to be exhibited to the Publick, without the joint Concurrence of all. (*FS2*, II:2, 53)

Far from “quickly abandon[ing] the familiar unifying feature of the ‘club’,” these women continue to perform the function of mutual validation and correction for one another throughout the text (Pettit, 48).

Furthermore, by inviting numerous correspondences into the space of this textual salon, Mrs. Spectator as mouth of every domestic woman also claims access to a range of *topoi*

otherwise unavailable to such women. By framing the more controversial statements (particularly about gender roles) as the contributions of correspondents, Haywood's eidolon can both engage these topics, and maintain a level of distance from them. Following de Scudéry, Haywood couches a proto-feminist agenda within a seemingly innocuous collection of letters and discourses. The periodical form thus fits the Scudérian salon model perfectly. In the first place, the periodical as Haywood constructs it is polyvalent and discursive. Not only does Mrs. Spectator claim to negotiate her own lucubrations – as she calls them – amongst the women of her club, but she also invites and maintains dialogue with members of her reading public. Thus, like Scudérian conversational rhetoric, *The Female Spectator* appears both heteroglossic and polyvocal. Rather than follow a monologic speech pattern of Mr. Spectator's "lectures," in which only the views of the speaking voice are available,²⁴ Mrs. Spectator's lucubrations must always make room for, and form a dialogue with, the voices and beliefs of others. As she does so, moreover, Mrs. Spectator follows Scudérian rules for polite and persuasive conversation that insist on non-oppositional rhetoric. According to de Scudéry, the speaker must engage the views of others first by agreeing with them in part, and second by presenting her own view, not as an opposition to, but as a variation of the other. Donawerth calls this "the ideal of 'the agreeable'". She explains:

[In de Scudéry's dialogue] each speaker either agrees with some aspect of the previous person's speech or apologizes for differing, and the speaker who provides core definitions builds on the ideas of those who went before her, rather than overthrowing them. ("Rational Woman," 311)

Thus, the atmosphere is one of "[agreeable] consensus rather than debate or argument" ("Conversation," 187). Perhaps modeling Mrs. Spectator's discourse after de Scudéry's own characters in *Les Femmes Illustres* or *Conversations*, Haywood reproduces salon conversation with Mrs. Spectator functioning as polite salonnière.

One exemplary instance of this conversational deference is in the textual performance of negotiation that takes place between Mrs. Spectator and her editorial club. In Book I, and in several others throughout, Mrs. Spectator interrupts her discussion thus:

I was going on to recite some other Instances of the Mischiefs, which, for the most part, are the Consequence of laying young People under too great a

²⁴ Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, 10, 2:44. Mr. Spectator refers to his essays as lectures throughout the periodical.

Restraint, when Mira came in, and seeing what I was about, took the Pen out of my Hand; and told me I had already said enough; if I proceeded to expatiate any farther on that Head, I should be in Danger of being understood to countenance an Extreme on the other Side, which was much more frequently fatal to our Sex. (1, II:2, 32)

Two points are worth noting about this passage. In the first place, Haywood's construction of Mrs. Spectator's voice blurs the boundaries between the written and spoken word. As Donawerth argues of de Scudéry, Haywood "[uses the same] standards of spoken language" ("Rational Woman," 312) to describe Mrs. Spectator's writing process. Here, we are invited to imagine a physical space in which the figure of Mrs. Spectator composes her "speech"; but she is not alone, Mira – the Wife – enters and literally "[takes] the Pen out of [her] Hand," because she has "already *said* enough" (FS1, II:2, 32, emphasis mine). As in Scudérian dialogues, these imaginary women work together to balance the debate in terms of arrangement and delivery. The space of discourse is here textual, yet we are shown the negotiation of that space as an actual conversation between two women. The balance of debate is my second point of interest. As Donawerth notes of de Scudéry's dialogue, where "there is frequently room for more than one right answer," this display of argumentative equilibrium between Mrs. Spectator and Mira suggests two sides to every issue ("Rational Woman," 311). It also suggests that to ignore the "other Side" can have dangerous consequences for those concerned. Similar instances of this internal negotiation among the Body of the *Female Spectator* occur throughout. Another can be found in Book IV, when Haywood introduces a possible objection to the topic at hand by having Mrs. Spectator explain the conversation between herself and her friends to the reader: "The beautiful and noble Widow [...] was inclinable to impute this thoughtless Behaviour in many People to the Negligence of those who [...] did not inspire them [...]: But we were all against her in this Point" (FS4, II:2, 126). She goes on to explain exactly how the rest of the coterie convinced the widow of their view, reinforcing the sense that conversation makes for the most successful persuasion.

Ultimately, Mrs. Spectator, as the *mouth* of Haywood's salon *body*, models her interactions with correspondents in much the same way as she does within her own circle of contributors. Although any number of instances of Mrs. Spectator's Scudérian salon rhetoric can be culled from her treatment of correspondent submissions, I will choose two as examples here – one from a woman called Sarah Oldfashion, and the other from a man styled Philo-Astrologio.

The widow Oldfashion's letter is noteworthy as the "First Correspondent the *Female Spectator* has yet been favour'd with," and not surprisingly, Mrs. Spectator declares that "the Entertainment prepared for this Month should be postponed" in order to include Oldfashion's correspondence without delay, both implying that her lucubrations are otherwise carefully planned, and that her readers' pleasure is her priority. In keeping with the dictates of de Scudéry's rhetoric, Oldfashion claims to treat *The Female Spectator* "as a Friend," and even "a Monitor," insisting that she "takes much greater Satisfaction in *applauding* than *condemning*" (*FS5*, II:2, 153). Her letter complains that her young daughter of fourteen years is obsessed with public diversions such as Ranelagh, and begs Mrs. Spectator to pen some "Public Reproof" upon these amusements in general, as they distract young women from ever becoming "good Wives, good Mothers, good Friends, or good Mistresses" (*FS5*, II:2, 155). She concludes her letter by declaring that if Mrs. Spectator should fail in convincing the young Miss Bidy Oldfashion, she will send the young lady into isolation in Cornwall. Mrs. Spectator's response follows de Scudéry's pattern admirably. Although she is "wholly against" Oldfashion's proposal for dealing with her daughter's penchant for diversion, Mrs. Spectator avoids opposing Oldfashion until the last – leaving her exemplary anecdotes to introduce the possibility that a penchant for public pleasures may be less problematic than harsh parental control. Instead, Mrs. Spectator "commiserat[es]" with Oldfashion's plight as a mother – and all mothers in similar circumstances. She obliges Oldfashion's request by illustrating a practical perspective on such entertainments, and exposing the motives behind their popularity. Only after these points are explored does Mrs. Spectator venture to object to Oldfashion's plan, pointing out the possible consequences, and providing a lengthy narrative exemplifying the ways in which parental restraint can lead to disaster (in this case, a clandestine marriage that brings misery to the anecdotal character of the tale) (*FS5*, II:2, 158). Finally having finished her tale, Mrs. Spectator offers a more moderate solution to Oldfashion: "[W]ean Miss Bidy from the immoderate Delight" in public diversions, she advises, by varying "the Scene". But, "to change [the scene] to one where only dismal Objects offering to the View," such as an isolated spot in Cornwall, "should render the past more pleasing," and defeat the purpose entirely. Instead, Mrs. Spectator suggests that (if not for the current war) a visit to France would be the best treatment (*FS5*, II:2, 166-167). Haywood's Mrs. Spectator recognizes the value of de Scudéry's "agreeable ideal," clearly preferring non-oppositional discourse to open argument. When in Book XV,

Oldfashion writes back to complain that her daughter has run off and married a groom after being sent into the country on Mrs. Spectator's advice, Mrs. Spectator placidly refers her readers back to Book V, pointing out that Mrs. Oldfashion "has not followed my Advice, but her own." Far from crowing over what is certainly meant to demonstrate the wisdom of her own advice, Mrs. Spectator treats her correspondent patiently and indulgently as a "good old Gentlewoman," despite having been "bitterly [reproached]" for advice she did not give (*FS15*, II:3, 100). Thus, Mrs. Spectator demonstrates the superior position in a debate over female agency by allowing the opposition to display its own folly, while building upon those points her correspondent has made in which she sees merit.

This tactic holds true for more philosophical topics, as well. Book XXIII features a letter from a correspondent styling himself Philo Astrologio, in which he argues for the scientific merit of astrology in divining human character by studying the planets during the hour of a person's birth. Mrs. Spectator's response is exemplary of Scudérian conversational method in that it simultaneously deflects attention from her obvious rejection of Astrologio's thesis, and emphasizes the praiseworthy. In the first place, Mrs. Spectator appeals to the public's reaction instead of her own:

I am persuaded [this Epistle] will be approved by more than will care to acknowledge [...] Exclusive of all the Advantages, and laudable Purposes my Correspondent has mentioned, there is a secret Wish lodged in the Hearts of every one to dive into Events before they happen... (*FS23*, II:3, 368)

Pursuing the topic with studied tact, Mrs. Spectator insists she will "stand neuter in the Argument" out of "Respect for those delightful Orbs which twinkle over [her] Head." Yet, she is not neutral. Her objection to astrology as a science is quite real but, in order to maintain non-oppositional yet rational discourse, she must couch her disagreement in an agreeably apologetic style: "[I] should be sorry to say any Thing that might depreciate [the stars]; yet am one of those who are afraid to ascribe too much to their Influence." The gentle "rebuttal" that follows addresses Philo Astrologio's example for astrological efficacy, pointing out where his own argument demonstrates that though astrology may point out a person's "Propensities," it cannot "inforce" them. She likewise draws from "common" knowledge about the efficacy of almanacs and the prediction of weather to suggest that even "the Dominion of the Stars over the Seasons is far from being absolute" (*FS23*, II:3, 368). But, she cannot leave her correspondent without

some polite encouragement. Claiming to “leave the Point to be discussed by others,” Mrs. Spectator concludes by applauding Philo Astrologio’s style:

if the Cause Philo-Astrologiœ has undertaken to maintain, be in itself *good*, the Warmth with which he expresses himself is highly praise-worthy; and if a *bad* one, it must be owned he has well defended it. So that either Way he has the Acknowledgments of the *Female Spectator*. (*FS23*, II:3, 369)

Taken together, Astrologio’s letter and Mrs. Spectator’s brief, but cogent, response represent a balanced view of a subject that must have been discussed with some interest – and much heat – during the period.

After all, the object of the salon is not to close down certain discourse or silence particular voices in favor of the salonnière’s own but to make a seemingly “natural” space in which mutual enjoyment is assured, and persuasive influence is imperceptible. Indeed, as salons “always filled some sort of institutional vacuum at the intersection between public and private life,” between the institutions of past and future, their sense of discursive openness was intrinsic to their survival. Thus, they “became sites for two form of innovation: the contestation of social conventions and the discussion of progressive ideas” (Kale, 4, 17). A salonnière’s skill is marked by the ability to keep the conversation going forward, while casting the most favorable impressions on those ideas of her own, or her correspondents, that suit the underlying purpose. In *Conversations*, de Scudéry’s characters demonstrate just how much art is deployed in making communication appear unstudied, unconstrained, “clear and easie,” “Noble and Natural” (qtd. in “Rational Woman,” 310). When writing letters, the character of Clariste says, “I do not make a point of fashioning my notes [...]. I write as I speak, I speak what I think, and provided that I make myself understood, I am content.” And according to the character Berise, the letter should be “a conversation between absent persons.” And yet, diction and style are clearly important. The author/speaker must be neither too “grand” nor too plebian, her observation “tastes of books and the study,” but is also “easy, natural, and noble – all at once” (qtd. in “Rational Woman,” 312). Therefore, as Donawerth concludes, the apparently non-political, private conversations of de Scudéry’s imagination are actually “a rhetorical space in which to exercise their influence” (“Rational Woman,” 312).

For this reason, the seeming lack of direction in the discourse of the salon space, such as I believe *The Female Spectator* to exemplify, is no reason to dismiss it as “ephemeral” miscellany. The adaptability of a salon was the trademark of a great salonnière: on some days her guests

might ‘gamble, sing, dance, play charades, listen to poetry, view art, or participate in theatrical representations’; on others they might engage in serious philosophical discussion (Kale, 6). For de Scudéry, such variety is a reflection of the author/speaker’s sensitivity to her audience, and thus a matter of pride. In *Les Femmes Illustres*, she describes this as “regular confusion,” a “pleasing mixture,” and “ane [sic] agreeable diversitie” such as one finds in a tastefully arranged bouquet. This is also the model of arrangement she follows in *Les Femmes Illustres* itself: “Just so heir [sic] I have chosen in historie the finest mater and the most different that I could; And I have so orderlie mixed, and so fitlie concealed them, that it is almost impossible but the reader shall be diverted” (qtd. in “Rational Woman,” 308). Thus, the salonnière claims to subdue the “exigency of [her] Affairs” to the pleasure of her audience (qtd. in “Rational Woman,” 309).

And, true to the mold of a Scudérian salonnière, Mrs. Spectator (and her club) never fails to present her own discourse as secondary to that of her correspondents – especially if their contributions fit her own agenda:

As, therefore, Hints of this Nature are conducive to bring about the main End, for which these Essays are published, our Correspondents may always depend, that on the receiving any such, whatever we had purposed to say of ourselves shall give Place, in order for them to appear. (*FS16*, II:3, 107)

Timeliness, or *kairos*, is here expressed much as de Scudéry suggests: one’s conversation “ought to be free and diversified, according to the times, places and persons with whom we are” (qtd. in “Rational Woman,” 310).²⁵ Addressing letter-writing “using [the same] standards of spoken language,” de Scudéry goes on to insist upon “accommodation of the audience, and all worldly circumstances that surround the speaker and speech.” Donawerth notes that for de Scudéry, “[a]voiding self-expression, the successful speaker assesses the desires of each particular audience and fulfills those desires” (“Rational Woman,” 312). This includes the actual direction of the discourse, and the subject matter. In *Conversations*, de Scudéry’s character, Valeria, asserts,

...there is nothing but may be said in Conversation, in case it be manag’d with Wit and Judgment, and the Party considers well where he is, to whom he speaks, and who he is himself. Notwithstanding though Judgment be absolutely necessary for the never saying any thing but what is to the purpose, yet the Conversation must appear so free, as to make it seem we don’t reject any of our

²⁵ Here, the character of Valeria is speaking in *Conversations on Divers Subjects*.

thoughts [...] without any affected design of speaking rather of one thing than of another. (qtd. in “Rational Woman,” 310)

By the end of this dialogue, as Donawerth explains, Valeria concludes that no subjects “can be excluded” from conversation as a rule, but “only at some times and with some people” (“Rational Woman,” 310-311). Donawerth elaborates further in “Conversation and the Boundaries of Public Discourse” that “[a]ppropriate topics of conversation *at times* include what colors of cloth best suit one’s complexion and how well one’s children are doing, as well as gallantry and science” (“Conversation,” 187). Therefore, when read as salon rhetoric, the apparent miscellany of *The Female Spectator* ceases to be incoherent. Instead, it becomes Haywood’s response to a Sophistic notion of *kairos* in the arrangement of *topoi*, carefully presented as a “natural” result of author-audience exchange.

The Female Spectator’s most thorough editor, Kathy King, describes the periodical’s arrangement thus:

a miscellaneous collection of forms and genres. One finds an abundance of stories, some sixty of them, many cautionary in nature or illustrative of the Female Spectator’s precepts; huge swathes of counsel and advice; letters and epistolary exchanges; snippets of poetry, character sketches; dialogue; a fragment of a play; even an account of a fantastic voyage.²⁶

In fine, as Mrs. Spectator would say, the makings of a most successful salon qua de Scudéry. King goes on to call the periodical “an *omnium gatherum* for mid-century intellectual life.” She says,

If *The Female Spectator* is an inscription of domestic experiences and spaces, it is also a testimonial to women’s intellectual aspirations and imaginings at this historical moment. Certainly the wide range of topics addressed – political, literary, scientific, historical, and philosophical – shows its author/editor to be a woman of lively curiosity...²⁷

Most interesting about King’s description here is its unintentional resonance with the atmosphere of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century salon. As Carolyn Lougee has argued, in *Le Paradis des Femmes*, the seventeenth-century French salon in particular was a female-centered space that

²⁶ Kathryn King, “Introduction to *The Female Spectator*,” in *The Female Spectator*, II:2:5.

²⁷ Ibid.

offered both sexes potential social mobility by virtue of such intellectual aspirations.²⁸ In proving themselves able to manage masterful conversation about such a wide range of subjects, the men and women of the salon hoped to advance their social positions, and/or manipulate certain political figures into their way of thinking. Donawerth notes that de Scudéry and her brother were both successful in doing so: Madeleine conversed her way into a “pension from the king,” and her brother, Georges, “gained [...] his preferment and political post” (“Rational Woman,” 315). In reading Haywood’s *Female Spectator* as a salon space, I suggest that her “aspirations,” while certainly commercial, nonetheless center on changing attitudes about women, and on female welfare in general. If her periodical “shows [her] to be a woman of lively curiosity,” it also shows her to be a clever strategist, for couched within every subject is an overarching interest in female pedagogy.

The Dutch Lady of Summatra: A “Fantastical” Account of Rhetorical Ingenuity

As an example of this strategically profeminist consistency, consider one of *The Female Spectator*’s most apparently outlandish inclusions, what King refers to as “an account of a fantastic voyage.”²⁹ In my reading, this “Brief Account of what befell some Gentlemen, who were Ship-wrecked on the Coast of Summatra, in the East-Indies” may be exotic in clime, but is in no way exotic to the periodical itself (*FS*28, II:3, 185). Rather, the alien setting has a defamiliarizing effect upon the otherwise familiar characters and events, allowing Mrs. Spectator to secure an ideological wedge between her audience’s concept of natural and unnatural, civilized and uncivilized. More importantly, this setting also allows her to showcase women as agents of communication and negotiation in the figure of the Dutch Lady. The episode, and a brief introductory segment, is therefore worthy of extended analysis.

The tale appears imbedded within Book XVIII, an installment that begins with an interestingly discursive segment that I want to note briefly here before addressing the tale itself because it both demonstrates a Scudérian notion of *kairos* (see “Rational Woman,” 310) and opens further possibilities for reading the travel narrative which it precedes. Mrs. Spectator

²⁸ Carolyn Lougee, *Le Paradis des Femmes: women, salons, and social stratification in seventeenth-century France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976).

²⁹ Kathryn King, “Introduction to *The Female Spectator*,” II:2:5.

begins Book XVIII by saying, “[a]s we have [always] shewed an unfeigned Readiness to oblige our Correspondents [...] we are extremely sorry to find that none of the Letters made mention of in our last have any just Pretense to a Place in the *Female Spectator*” (FS28, II:3, 177). She proceeds by mentioning each correspondent in turn, giving her reasons for excluding them at some length. In doing so, she accomplishes two important things: she shows her understanding that some topics should be addressed only at the right time and in the right company, and she succeeds in drawing the readers’ attention to the act of exclusion, as well as the topics excluded. For instance, she turns away one overtly political submission because (as King notes) “[a]t the time of publication, the Pretender remained [...] poised to march south upon England”.³⁰ It is important to note the *inclusive* impact of Mrs. Spectator’s *exclusive* gesture here. Indeed, her discourse for the entire book centers on the topic introduced by a “rejected correspondent,” and as Earla Wilputte convincingly argues, continue to highlight Mrs. Spectator’s act of exclusion. Wilputte suggests that Haywood’s open censorship serves as a form of protest, since she may be excluding political topics as a preventative measure against charges of seditious libel. According to Wilputte, “[i]f we apply the deconstructionist notion of absent presence [...] silence provides a space for interpretations,” thus revealing that “[t]he parallels between silent, modest female behavior and the enforced effacement of unsanctioned views point to Haywood’s concern that important elements of society are stifled to the detriment of truth, leaving us with only half the real story of how things are.”³¹ Thus, Haywood’s demonstrative exclusion of unsuitable topics simultaneously reinforces her conversational modesty and brings her act of silence to our attention. This context of absent presence is significant in reading the fantastic voyage, because by filling the void left by Mrs. Spectator’s self-censorship on matters of public policy, the narrative becomes a space in which silence speaks for itself.

In the character of the salonnière, Mrs. Spectator steers the discussion from fictitiously embellished voyages, which she finds distastefully exaggerate reality, to true adventures by encouraging a “particular Acquaintance” to tell his story to her readers. Like de Scudéry’s well-chosen dialogues, Mrs. Spectator calls her friend’s tale “an agreeable Entertainment,” but it has other virtues to recommend its inclusion in a protofeminist periodical. In the first place, of

³⁰ FS28, II:3, 442 n. 2.

³¹ Earla Wilputte, “‘Too ticklish to meddle with’: The Silencing of *The Female Spectator*’s Political Correspondents,” *Fair Philosopher*, 123, 124.

course, unexplored lands of the globe are a topic of vogue in the mid-eighteenth-century. As Mrs. Spectator explains, most mercantile or military travelers rarely venture “a few Miles beyond the Forts,” and are therefore unable to satisfy the curiosities of those at home in England (*FS18*, II:3, 184). Offering her readers the rare treat of exotic climes, in this case Sumatra, thus boosts the commercial appeal of *The Female Spectator* – especially when presented in the voice of the adventurer, rather than as second-hand news from Mrs. Spectator herself. In the second place, the unromanticized yet detailed account of Sumatran culture and religion allow the Female Spectator to reflect pedagogically upon English custom and cultural practice, defamiliarizing readers in order to suggest that judgment based upon ignorance or misunderstanding is universally dangerous. Finally, and most significantly, the narrator’s stranded party of English seamen and traders are preserved from danger by the clever maneuvers of a European woman living among the natives, whose ability to transcend linguistic divides underscores the metaphorical parallels between her diplomatic position in the narrative, Mrs. Spectator’s discursive position in the periodical, and Haywood’s pedagogical position as author.

This woman and Mrs. Spectator’s conversation following the conclusion of the tale are the elements worth examining at length. Shipwrecked on the “Continent of Summatra” with most of his companions and the ship’s crew, Mrs. Spectator’s merchant friend describes his party’s fear at being captured by “three or four hundred” native “Indians” armed with bows and other weapons. Their fate is dangerously uncertain until they are at last delivered to “an old Indian of a very venerable aspect, and a Woman who seemed about forty Years of Age, and by her Complexion, Air and Features, appeared to be an European, though her Habit was exactly the same as [...] the Natives of Bencoolen and Bombay” (*FS18*, II:3, 187). To their “agreeable surprise,” the woman speaks French, asking them to relate their story and performing the office of interpreter to the “venerable” Indian – the high priest of the area. But her services to them far exceed that of interpreter. Not only does she promise to “do her utmost to serve” them in reaching their destination safely, her timely “intercession” changes the attitude of the natives toward the group. They are given better food, accommodations, and allowed to partake in the local festivities. Furthermore, her trust in them, and her ability to communicate their true intentions to the people, encourages the local chief and others to strike a bargain with the travelers in which a number of the Indians agree to serve as guides in exchange for what goods can be saved from the wreckage of the ship. Though the language of the narrative tends to

discourage sensationalism, it is clear that simply killing the group of English foreigners, rather than guiding them overland to their destination, might have been the alternative. Yet, the “Dutch Lady” goes even further in securing their welfare by entrusting one of the Indian guides with money to be delivered upon their arrival at Bencoolen:

...the Dutch Lady, whom they called *Cahatou*, had sent me an hundred Crowns for the Use of Myself and Friends; but, that she might be certain the Person she confided in had faithfully discharged the Trust she reposed in him, desired I would send something back to her, as a Token I had received her Benevolence. (*FS18*, II:3, 197)

Without this thoughtful gift, the group would have been in dire straights – though they had escaped death and reached their destination – for the Indians had striped them of everything they possessed: “What was to become of us afterwards, or by what Means we should be able to prosecute our Journey, Pennyless and almost naked as we were, we left to Heaven” (*FS18*, II:3, 196). Heaven, however, was not necessary for the woman to whom they already owed their lives had also secured their future.

Interestingly, the narrator and his companions struggle to comprehend their female savior’s situation. As their native captors explain, Cahatou had been found washed ashore some twenty years previous, the sole survivor of a shipwreck that also claimed the lives of her Dutch merchant family. The High Priest, “taking a Fancy to [her],” brought her into his family and eventually became devoted to her as his wife. And she, responding to the “good Usage” she received, grew equally devoted to him. Some of the narrator’s party remark that, as the priest is perhaps the most powerful man in the Kingdom, “she might very well content herself to be one of the greatest Women in the Country, and to have so good a Husband” (*FS18*, II:3, 191). Others, express shock amongst themselves that she “could ever be brought to think herself happy, not only among Pagans, but also to lie by the Side of the Chief of those who preached Idolatry, and become the Mother of a Race of Infidels.” All of the Englishmen, however, “[pity] the sad Necessity she had been under,” graciously considering her choice as the lesser of evils; yet, none of them remark her assurance of “some Influence over those [in Power],” and the relative ease with which she manipulates the terms of their stay among them, as sufficient recompense for life among “savages” (*FS18*, II:3, 192). They don’t have to; the events of the narrative alone reveal Cahatou’s significant autonomy and agency in her new pagan home. Not only does she directly effect foreign policy, so to speak, but she is also trusted with a significant

measure of financial responsibility since she can set aside great sums for her own disposal. She has, indeed, used her clever ability to assimilate and communicate to great advantage – both for herself, and for those she seeks to defend.

Despite such achievement, Mrs. Spectator elects not to comment on the Dutch Lady. Nevertheless, her silence on the issue lingers in the subsequent sociological perspective she offers on Sumatran culture. It seems unlikely that Haywood herself could have overlooked the woman's interesting position in the tale – a position so like her own in so many ways. That women are foremost in her thoughts is evident in most everything she ever published. Therefore I think it fair to say that her eidolon, Mrs. Spectator, practices silence regarding Cahatou for good reason. Donawerth's analysis of Scudérian salon rhetoric offers a possible explanation: "In her dialogue on letter writing, Scudéry suggests that in the letter of news there is always 'something one should never hand on' – something one should never put into writing" ("Rational Woman," 315). In other words, some topics, given the context and/or audience, can be "too ticklish [...] to meddle with" directly for the modest eidolon of a popular periodical (*FS18*, II:3, 178).³² The Dutchwoman's position is all together too problematic for "agreeable" mixed-sex discussion: Cahatou has calmly converted to paganism, is one of several wives, and seems "perfectly reconciled to her Fate" (*FS18*, II:3, 191). Indeed, there is no question of her contentment; she never indicates the slightest interest in the Europe she left behind, let alone the desire to return. The implication is that her lot among the Indians is just as commodious as it might have been in Christian Europe, if not more so. Certainly, these are observations Mrs. Spectator cannot make in eighteenth-century England without stirring controversy. However, it should be noted that, in respecting silence, Mrs. Spectator also neglects to pursue the potentially acceptable observation made by her correspondent: She refuses to lament the "sad Necessity" of Cahatou's assimilation into Sumatran society. Since Mrs. Spectator repeatedly defends women in situations of exploitation or extortion throughout the periodical, this is a significant departure from the norm.

Indeed, Mrs. Spectator's rather philosophical reflections on cultural and religious practice indicate feelings quite the opposite of the narrator's regarding the Dutchwoman. To those who

³² This is Mrs. Spectator's response to the politically-minded submission of a Mr. Tell-Truth. The general subject, however, as I noted, she pursues indirectly throughout the book.

are incredulous that “any Nation could be so absurd as to adore a wooden Image they themselves had made,” she has this to say:

...do we not daily see Instances of particular Persons, who idolize, and in a Manner worship, what has no other Merit than themselves have given it? [...] whole Nations have been, and still are guilty of it [...]. I think, therefore, [...] the Indians [cannot be] looked upon as the only Fools in Creation for the Worship they pay their Idol. (*FS18*, II:3, 199)

Using the tale’s illustration of Indian customs to defamiliarize British cultural practice for her readers, Mrs. Spectator challenges them to see the Indians, not with pity or ridicule, but as mirrors for themselves – put another way, the English can be just as savage as the “savages” of Sumatra. Thus, the Female Spectator comments indirectly on the “ticklish” subject of female agency and autonomy, while introducing her readers to “a more just Idea of those distant Parts of the Globe” to which they see themselves so superior – particularly in regard to the treatment of women (*FS18*, II:3, 198). As a matter of fact, more outspoken protofeminists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries often refer to the culture of “Mahometans” and other non-Christian peoples of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, as a way of chastising the narrowness of their own countrymen on matters of sexual discrimination. A *Female Spectator* correspondent styling herself Cleora articulates the parallel as follows:

The Mahometans, indeed, enslave their Women, but then they teach them to believe their Inferiority will extend to Eternity; but our Case is much worse than this, for while we live in a free Country [of] excellent Christian Principles [...] our Minds [...] are wholly left uncultivated. (*FS10*, II:2, 355)

The comparison is one already circulating in the on-going debate over female intellectual autonomy both within the salon conversation of *The Female Spectator* and English society at large, but without the mask of a correspondent identity to introduce it, Mrs. Spectator risks her popular appeal should she articulate such an argument at such a juncture in the periodical. Nevertheless, Haywood has effectively increased the critique articulated by Cleora, since Cahatou is clearly *not* a slave or an inferior among the Sumatrans, despite her status as a displaced woman – making this example potentially more incendiary. With no points upon which to base English superiority in their treatment of women, whose culture looks to be the better in such a context? Many of Haywood’s readers are sure to have recognized the parallels. When seen thus, is the inclusion of a “fantastic voyage” in *The Female Spectator* so very fantastic?

Indeed, its appearance demonstrates not only Haywood's sense of *kairos* but also her sensitivity to the management of *topoi* consistent with the parameters of successful salon conversation and composition. Nor is it coincidence, I think, that the travel narrative she includes in her miscellaneous periodical portrays a woman in a role of significance and intelligence, whose skills of persuasion are as considerable as they are subtle. Haywood's sense of timeliness thus functions on two levels. First, she chooses a wide variety of subject material, apt for its social moment; and second, she manages to introduce, present, and reflect upon that material in a way best suited to maintain an "agreeable" dialogue within a polite (conservative) atmosphere, despite the appearance of potentially progressive ideas. The disparity of *topoi* throughout her periodical flows as a conversation, with all the appearance of "[d]iscourse [that] is clear and easie," responding to the whims of the audience (where appropriate) without "affectation" or "constraint in her words" (qtd. in "Rational Woman," 213). This, de Scudéry insists, is an eloquence "that sometimes conveys a more charming effect with less noise [than the public orator], principally among the ladies; for in a word, the art of speaking well about trifles is not known to all sorts of people" (qtd in "Conversation," 314). In the salon space of *The Female Spectator*, however, the "art of speaking well about trifles" unifies what otherwise appears a motley crew, within an on-going discussion in which women control the discourse, and are themselves the object of its underlying pedagogy.

The Female Spectator thus structures itself as the ideal "reading situation for women" in which to address those social limitations that hamper women's intellectual lives, and to offer them an "agreeable" alternative. Nevertheless, to identify *The Female Spectator*'s spatial genealogy as a part of seventeenth-century French salon mythos might be said to beg the question. After all, does Haywood not – in both the character of the Female Spectator as "sister" to Mr. Spectator, and in the title of her periodical – openly and repeatedly signify her relationship to Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *The Spectator*, rather than any French salon? The answer to this question must be an unequivocal *yes*. And indeed, Mr. Spectator's shadow has hung over that of his younger sister from the earliest moments of *The Female Spectator*'s critical life as the model against which her discourse must be judged. In many cases, that has meant dismissing Haywood's periodical as a cheap knock-off at worst, an unbearably dull – and undoubtedly lesser – representation at best. But, throughout the periodical, characters like the Dutch Lady, who exercise such persuasive influence over the men around her, and

correspondents like Philenia, who yearns for the conversation of French society, express a longing for intellectual agency denied to young women like her within the pages of *The Spectator*.

In Chapter 2, I shall argue that *The Female Spectator* does not simply adopt and adapt *The Spectator*'s reformist mission. Rather, Addison and Steele's mission itself represents an appropriation of the salon's civilizing, acculturating work as an exclusively male prerogative. Having brilliantly transferred civilization and diplomacy from the feminocentric salon to the androcentric coffeehouses of London, *The Spectator*'s philosophy of polite conversation is attainable only through virtuous men, and in spite of the corruption of women. The masculine coffeehouse, as the preserve of men of sense, thus supplants the salon's amalgamation of public and private, while Mr. Spectator in turn co-opts the rhetorical and creative agency of the female salonnière. "Fair-Sexing It" from the very first issue, as Kathryn Shevelow notes, Addison and Steele establish *The Spectator* as a periodical determined to appeal to female readers with the very best interests of the ladies in mind.³³ But in truth, their textual coffeehouse had already disenfranchised them. In adapting *The Spectator* papers into *The Female Spectator*, Eliza Haywood can be seen as subtly reclaiming civilized conversation as a space of creative intellectual agency for women. Ultimately, I show that reclaiming the role of salonnière for women suggests that both men and women are better served when the discourse of print is as welcoming of "Female Orators" as it is to passive female receptors.

³³ Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and print culture*.

CHAPTER TWO: THE “FEMALE REPUBLIC” AND “THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS”: ELIZA HAYWOOD’S REVISION OF ADDISON AND STEELE

DEAR MR. SPECTATOR,

I have a sot of a husband that lives a very scandalous life; who wastes away his body and fortune in debaucheries; and is immoveable to all the arguments I can urge to him. I would gladly know whether in some cases a cudgel may not be allowed as a good figure of speech, and whether it may not be lawfully used by a Female Orator.

Your humble servant,

BARBARA CRABTREE (S252, 4:204)

First appearing in the Wednesday, December 19, 1711 sheet of Addison and Steele’s *The Spectator*, this satiric – probably fictional – letter nevertheless suggests a problematic relationship between at least part of the popular periodical’s female audience and the improving “lectures” of its text. Barbara Crabtree’s ironic message creates a space of difference between her own bitter reality and the ideal so emphatically espoused by *The Spectator*. Within this space lies the crux of Eliza Haywood’s own essential departure from Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.¹ For, as we shall see, the “weapons” of a Female Orator within *The Spectator* spring from neither cudgel, nor composition, but are instead nothing more than an arsenal of tears, sighs, pouts, and eyes.² Such characterization of female rhetoric and intellect implicitly debases, indeed rejects, the notion of women as the duty-bound – or even capable – instructors of civilized conversation and diplomacy that persisted in the French salon mythos. And, as Barbara Crabtree so blatantly suggests, the apparent rhetorical force of feminine beauty also belies the true state of powerlessness for women inherent in the eighteenth-century patriarchal family – a position that *The Spectator* studiously cultivates as charming dependence. While *The Spectator* issues preceding Mrs. Crabtree’s note, to which she so ironically alludes, constitute a systematic mockery of rational feminine conversation, persuasion, and argument, they simultaneously

¹ For a brief discussion of the politics of difference in *The Spectator*, see Felicity Nussbaum, “Introduction: The Politics of Difference,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23 (Summer 1990), 375-386.

² See, for example, *The Spectator* no. 247, 4:178-182, and no. 252, 4:202-205.

pretend to encourage women in an “erudition” – as Mr. Spectator calls it – that ultimately reduces their rhetorical prowess to an utter dependence upon the romantic admiration of men of sense (S66, 2:173). For, though Haywood’s Mrs. Spectator would echo his sentiment that women ought “to endeavour to make themselves the Objects of a reasonable and lasting Admiration [...] from those inward Ornaments which are not to be defaced by Time or Sickness,” the nature of this “endeavour,” and of those “inward Ornaments,” is as different for Haywood as a French salon is different from a London coffeehouse (S73, 2:207).³ Indeed, as with the spattering of *The Spectator*’s similarly discordant correspondents, Mrs. Crabtree’s query is met with silence. The joke, we are to presume, speaks for itself: Sottish male readers are ridiculed, and defeated wives may enjoy their momentary hearing. Since the Spectator maintains that true rhetoric and oratory, whether in the public sphere or the supposedly private one, lies with men, there is nothing more to be said. Where tears and sighs have failed, Mrs. Crabtree may try her cudgel.

Eliza Haywood takes a more effective method than Mrs. Crabtree in responding to Mr. Spectator’s airy dismissal of the female reality. Reasserting the intellectual and creative prerogative over the public/private that is the conversational essence of feminine salon space, Haywood tacitly challenges the presumption of *The Spectator* coffeehouse that an elite masculine atmosphere is capable of fostering the kind of reflection in both men and women so important to the improvement of women’s lives. As this chapter will show, reading *The Female Spectator* as textual salon suggests that the periodical is more than just a savvy spin-off of an established classic, or a half-hearted attempt to adopt masculine authority. On the contrary, although *The Female Spectator*’s parallels to *The Spectator* cannot – and should not – be overlooked, Haywood’s interpretation of Addison and Steele’s creation proves that, in eighteenth-century England, not only is the sex of the spectator “epistemologically significant,” but the gendered nature of his/her textual space is even more so (Code, 26). Critics have long argued, with equal conviction, the opposing perceptions of *The Female Spectator* as on the one hand addressing women and focusing upon their welfare as none had done before,⁴ or on the

³ For a thorough examination of the link between such sentiments in *The Female Spectator* and seventeenth-century feminist rationalists like Mary Astell, see Chapter Four.

⁴ For discussions of *The Female Spectator* as contributing to the formation of a cult of femininity and women’s readership, and as a precursor to the women’s magazine, see Helene Koon, “Eliza Haywood and the *Female Spectator*,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 42, (Winter,

other “endorsing” the tenants of an internalized sexual difference so fundamental to *The Spectator*’s own advancement of separate sphere ideology.⁵ However, none have ventured to explore *The Spectator*’s rejection of French influence on polite conversation in both spatial construction and content. Critics have likewise neglected to explore Addison and Steele’s similar rejection of the preeminence of women as instruments of civilizing discourse infiltrating the English imaginary from French salon culture. Idealizing and standardizing the coffeehouse as the new –English – model for civilizing intellectual discourse, Addison and Steele perform two important ideological feats at once: rejecting the effeminacy and “levity” of French cultural practice in favor of the masculinity and rationality of English practices, and *feminizing* male discourse without the conversational authority of women. The very premise of the papers as recreating the talk of the masculine coffeehouse for the consumption and edification of the feminine “tea-table” presupposes that all female readers stand in need of that instruction by virtue of their sexual difference from men. Furthermore, such representation of essential spatial difference between coffeehouse and tea-table implies that the exchange of intelligent conversation must always flow in one direction: that is, from the coffeehouse *to* the tea-table – and the only proper carriers of such discourse are men.

It is an important distinction. For, though presided over by women, the tea-table as benign scene of domesticity or chaste heterosexual pleasantries never possessed the fluidity between the ostensibly separate spheres of the public and private world accorded to the salon.⁶

1978), 43-55; Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and print culture: the construction of femininity in the early periodical*; Patricia Meyer Spacks, introduction to *Selections from The Female Spectator*, by Eliza Haywood, ed. Patricia Meyer Spacks (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), ix-xxii.

⁵ For discussions of *The Female Spectator* as appropriating masculine authority in the interest of endorsing separate sphere ideology in tandem with *The Spectator*, see Shawn Lisa Maurer, *Proposing Men: dialectics of gender and class in the eighteenth-century English periodical*; Ricardo Miguel-Alfonso, “Social Conservatism, Aesthetic Education, and the Essay Genre in Eliza Haywood’s *Female Spectator*,” in *Fair Philosopher*, 72-81. I should note that Koon, Shevelow, and Spacks also argue for Haywood’s complicity in separate sphere ideology, if albeit from the perspective of her essential difference from *The Spectator* as a woman, addressing women.

⁶ For a discussion of Haywood’s periodicals as “challenging the exclusively male” space of the coffeehouse “with the more civilized conversation of the women’s tea-tables,” see Rachel K. Carnell, “The Very Scandal of her Tea Table: Eliza Haywood’s Response to the Whig Public Sphere,” in *Presenting gender: changing sex in early-modern culture*, ed. Chris Mounsey (Lewisburg, Pa: Bucknell University Press, 2001), 255-273.

Though the true extent of their public influence is debatable, the salonnières most certainly possessed the agency to physically compose and rhetorically refine polite society itself, in which the best and the brightest (men and women) of politics, science, and literature mingled under their direction. This is the power that Addison and Steele sought to appropriate for their coffeehouse paper, and which *The Female Spectator* seeks to recapture in Haywood's own mid-century revision. For while Mr. Spectator may claim the creative and conversational authority of the salonnière, in which feminine agreeableness and decorum maintain diplomacy, he nevertheless asserts his rhetorical authority through masculine irony, satire, and thinly disguised opposition. For the "Fair Sex," figured as those to whom his "Paper will be more useful" than to anyone else, this means accepting an unrelenting objectification that paradoxically insists upon their ignorance of men's spectatorship (*S10*, 1:46). Shawn Lisa Maurer articulates the impossible position for women *The Spectator* constructs: "Thus the only woman who could possibly possess a clear picture of herself would be one whose sense of self-worth did not consist in being pleasing or beautiful, but this is a Catch-22; since pleasing others is what defines female worth, such a creature would no longer be a woman" (104).

The Spectator and *The Female Spectator* can be considered as, to borrow Kathryn Shevelow's phrase, intrinsically and reciprocally engaged with "multivalent social texts." As such, these periodicals are themselves "social formations, sites of the discursive construction of ideology, engaged in multiple and overdetermined relationships with readers."⁷ Indeed, the "public sphere," as Jürgen Habermas initially proposed it – and exemplified for him in the space of the coffeehouse – arose first in the "world of letters" (*literarische Öffentlichkeit*) as an apolitical form.⁸ This formative history is significant, both in establishing the role of print in the ideological manifestation of space and in studying the salon as such a manifestation, especially when we consider that the salon was itself a physical extension of the Republic of Letters. Therefore, even for Habermas, the ideological and spatial genealogy of the coffeehouse is much more indebted to the salon than its champions are willing to admit. In this chapter, I build upon the notion of salon rhetoric as the unifying discourse of *The Female Spectator*, theorizing the

⁷ Shevelow, *Women and print culture*, 20.

⁸ Brian Cowan, "What Was Masculine about the Public Sphere? Gender and the Coffeehouse Milieu in Post-Restoration England," *History Workshop Journal*, 51 (Spring, 2001), 127-157. Subsequent references to this article will be cited parenthetically by page number.

inherent discrepancies in spatial ideology between Addison and Steele's coffeehouse periodical and Eliza Haywood's periodical salon. We shall see that, despite its parallels to *The Spectator*, and perhaps by virtue of them, *The Female Spectator* evokes a space in which the polyvalent construction of gender identity eschews the sexual essentialism of separate sphere ideology even as it operates within that construct. Furthermore, the tacit evocation of salon culture as a model for civilizing discourse positions women – as readers, as writers, as “orators” – at the center of such discourse, rather than at its perimeter. By its inception a space that assumes the reciprocity of male-female conversation and mutual enlightenment, the salon as model implies female subjectivity and rhetorical capacity with and beside men. And finally, the feminocentric nature of the salon allows Haywood to expose the shallowness of a “sexual nature,” destabilizing perceptions of female inadequacy by illustrating the politics of gender hierarchy. Occupying the position of socio-political subjection, Lorrain Code argues, “women in patriarchal societies” have consistently found themselves outside the traffic of discourse – even when it pretends to address them. Thus, Code explains, women “have to perform these acts of translation twice over: to translate both from idiolect to idiolect and from androcentered language into a language that can achieve some connection with their experiences” (58). Mrs. Spectator's position as a woman addressing an eighteenth-century audience of both sexes is thus vital to her position as compassionate pedagogue, mentor, and judge. Rather than simply enforce the internalization of a code of male-female behavior in the interest of masculine identity, Mrs. Spectator underscores the enforced ignorance and dependence of women in eighteenth-century society, and the arbitrary nature of the male prerogative, thus encouraging sympathy in men, and pragmatism in women.

This chapter begins by theorizing the disparate spaces of the coffeehouse and the salon as they are evoked by these two periodicals, suggesting that the very nature of these socio-ideological spaces, with their paradigmatic exclusions and inclusions, their hierarchies, and the gendered agency, autonomy, and subjectivity they imply, limits the range of identities their readers can assume as participant consumers of the text. To illustrate this point, I will then examine what I suggest are parallel, but intrinsically oppositional, moments within the two texts. Through close reading, I will show the ways in which *The Female Spectator's* salon reclaims female subjectivity, identity, and rhetorical agency (on a number of levels) from the masculine preserve of *The Spectator's* coffeehouse. Finally, I argue that the rhetoric of salon conversation

further the interests of mutual understanding and respect between the sexes, by favoring the sentimental over the sardonic, pragmatism over satire.

The Spectator: “No Place for a Lady,” or, The Alien in the Coffeehouse

And it is also worthy the consideration of the magistrates whether a young woman, or sometimes two together should be suffered to set up such [coffee]houses, seeing 'tis highly reasonable to suspect they design rather to expose themselves to sale than their coffee... This city is not without instances of coffee-womens having been debacht, even in some of the best frequented and most populous places of the city, under their husbands noses, which demonstrates the inconveniency of exposing women at publick bars... its much more commendable to see none but men and boys in a coffeehouse...⁹

John Dunton's observations in *The Night-Walker* (1697) encapsulate the essential exclusion of women from the popular London coffeehouses whose amalgamation of public and private, political and personal, form the spatial model for Addison and Steele's periodicals. As the most popular of these, *The Spectator* takes pains to invite its readers into that space as members of its Spectator Club. The quote from Juvenal that opens the introduction of the club in *Spectator* No. 2 implies their inclusion, along with the persona of Mr. Spectator himself, as the “more” of “Six and more cry with one voice” (S2, 1: 9 my emphasis). Indeed, Mr. Spectator introduces each of the six members of the Spectator Club as if the reader had just joined their table: “Next to Sir Andrew in the Club-room sits Captain Sentry,” he writes (S2, 1:6). “We” are literally *in* the club. Such a gesture of inclusion, many have argued, appears to democratize the relationship between the Spectator eidolon and the reader, opening a dialectical exchange in which readers both attend to, identify with, model, and even participate (in hopes of subsequent publication) with Mr. Spectator and his morning “sheet-full of thoughts” (S1, 1:4).¹⁰ But not everyone who read *The Spectator* did so from the same point of implicit welcome within the space of

⁹ John Dunton, *The Night-Walker: or, Evening Rambles in Search After Lewd Women*, vol. 2 of 2 vols., ed. James Orme, (London, 1696-7), 8-9.

¹⁰ For more discussion on the author-reader relationship in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* papers, see Michael G. Ketcham, *Transparent designs: reading, performance, and form in the Spectator papers*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985); and Scott Black, “Social and Literary Form in *the Spectator*,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 33, (Fall 1999), 21-42.

coffeehouse/club. Indeed, Dunton's sentiments pervade what we know about eighteenth-century London coffeehouse culture, even more so for the gentlemen's club.

Brian Cowan's study, "What Was Masculine about the Public Sphere? Gender and the Coffeehouse Milieu in Post-Restoration England," explores the extent to which the public sphere of the coffeehouse was – ideologically speaking – a masculine preserve. Cowan suggests that few spaces in eighteenth-century London could have been more the province of men than the coffeehouse, needing no hard and fast rules to make women unwelcome. "The coffeehouses of London were simply no place for a lady who wished to preserve her respectability," he writes, adding that there exists no evidence of women ever taking part in coffeehouse debate (143). Few enough instances exist of "respectable" ladies ever stepping foot inside one, and all such instances involved the particular business of shop-keeping women. Most ladies, such as the wife of one Mr. James Brydges, literally stopped short of the door. Cowan notes of Brydges' London journal, between 1697 and 1702, "although he often travelled around the town with his wife, it is remarkable that she never accompanied him to the coffeehouses he visited" (145). On one particular day, Brydges recorded that "my wife set me down at Tom's coffeehouse," on her way to make her own visits, picking him up again at the coffeehouse on her way back home, but never stepping foot inside (145-6). "Coffee-women," it would seem, were the only exception to this unwritten rule. According to Cowan, women owned twenty percent of coffeehouses in 1692-1693, and some women were certainly employed by coffeehouse proprietors as serving maids. But such women were frequently stigmatized as illicit, loose, and in some cases "subject to public satires," in which their success as business owners was attributed to prostitution. And, all "coffee-women" were vulnerable to the frequent solicitations of their male patrons, "many of whom were of a higher social station" (147).¹¹

It is significant to note that coffeehouses in the resorts of Bath and Turnbridge, unlike those in the capital, encouraged the patronage of women when they "doubled as gambling houses," and the resulting atmosphere, as Cowan describes it, is strikingly similar to the salon: "They adapted the cachet of sobriety and politeness attached to the male coffeehouses and

¹¹ Paula McDowell, in *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678-1730*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), explores the role of female pamphleteers in coffeehouse culture. Nevertheless, Cowan points out that such women were either illiterate, simply not respectable, or both, and few would have enjoyed the same welcome within the coffeehouse as its educated male patrons.

translated it into a social milieu characterized more by leisure than by business” (144). Addison and Steele, however, chose not to model *The Spectator* according to this mixed-sex paradigm, nor does the periodical’s content suggest a place for women amid the polite, intelligent conversation that it presents as the coffeehouse ideal – quite the contrary. In numerous issues, Mr. Spectator and his correspondents make it quite clear that the presence of females in the coffeehouse has a poisonous effect on the conversation and behavior of its male patrons. In number 49, Mr. Spectator declares that the coffeehouse is “his Element” because it precludes any situation in which he should be forced to speak. Such situations he identifies as “mirthful meeting of men,” in which reduced numbers and a celebratory atmosphere make his silence obvious, and all “assemblies of the fair sex,” in which it would seem that *any* gathering in which women are concerned requires his verbal attendance and is therefore to be avoided (S49, 2:90). Number 87 suggests a more complete idea of his sentiments on this head. A correspondent styled T.T. writes, “I cannot but complain to you that there are, in six or seven places of this city, coffee-houses kept by persons of that sisterhood [of Idols],” who attract about them the “adoration of the youth.” The result is that business everywhere is deteriorating:

I know in particular, goods are not entered as they ought to be at the Custom-house, nor law-reports perused at the Temple; by reason of one beauty who detains the young merchants too long near ’Change, and another fair one who keeps the students at her [coffee]house when they should be at study. (S87, 2:267-268)

Apparently, women turn the coffeehouses into stages for romance. T.T. claims, “I saw a gentleman turn as pale as ashes, because an Idol turned the sugar in a tea-dish for his rival, and carelessly called the boy to serve him.” In short, the ensuing drama destroys the intellectual ideal of coffeehouse conversation: “we who come to do business, or talk politics, are utterly poisoned.” Indeed, men are quite sickened and “advance, as fast as they can, to a fever, or a diabetes,” on account of these women (S87, 2:269). For his own part, the correspondent hopes that henceforth “the Idols would mix ratsbane only for their admirers, and take more care of us who don’t love them” (S87, 2:270).

It is certainly true that even for men, the London coffeehouse did not necessarily actualize the democratic, egalitarian openness it has come to stand for. Rachel K. Carnell points to historian Thomas Macaulay’s description of the coffeehouse as open to any man “who laid down his penny at the bar,” yet at the same time, “every rank and profession, and every shade of

religious and political opinion, had its own quarters.” So strictly did the proprietors and patrons observe the particular “usages of the house,” that a blundering new-comer might be quickly encouraged, by “the sneers of the whole assembly and the short answers of the waiters,” to “go somewhere else.”¹² Nevertheless, the social, literary, and political cliques of the various coffeehouses into which Mr. Spectator might be “seen thrusting [his] head,” and even the clear class hierarchy Mr. Spectator describes within the coffeehouses themselves,¹³ are not insurmountable difficulties for his male reading audience. The Spectator himself frequents all of the coffeehouses, Whig, Tory, literary, and otherwise, eaves-dropping upon the conversations of every class therein, yet “never open[s] [his] lips but in [his] own club” (S1, 1:3). It is the spirit and function of the coffeehouse discourse that he seeks to preserve, refine, and propagate for the “benefit of my contemporaries” and “the improvement of the country,” not party politics and class hierarchies (S1, 1:4). Mr. Spectator’s club, like his coffeehouse-habit, encompasses Tory and Whig, scholar and clergyman, lower gentry and merchant – tacitly proposing to feminize oppositional male discourse.¹⁴ The problem is in Mr. Spectator’s insistence that women, not men, are his most likely beneficiaries while constructing his paper as a hybrid between coffeehouse and club – two spaces into which the women of his audience are decidedly unwelcome.

Maurer’s study, *Proposing Men: dialectics of gender and class in the eighteenth-century English periodical*, addresses this troubling dynamic. She argues that while *The Spectator* presents men coming together from opposing worldviews and generations, by virtue of “munificent rationality” (118), this “greater emphasis in male relations demanded an even more powerful demarcation between the sexes,” and a construction of a “female Other” by which to define themselves (119). “[T]he supposedly nonpartisan apolitical stance of the Spectator Club and the periodical itself,” she continues, “depend upon women’s exclusion both from the club and from the realism of politics, thus configuring women as the common enemy against whom

¹² Quoted in Rachel K. Carnell, “The Very Scandal of her Tea Table: Eliza Haywood’s Response to the Whig Public Sphere,” in *Presenting gender: changing sex in early-modern culture*, 260.

¹³ In *The Spectator* no. 49, Mr. Spectator describes the succession, rather than the mingling, of one class of patrons after the other as the day wears on.

¹⁴ It is important to note that neither Spectator nor Female Spectator include working-class citizens – the Spectator’s merchant friend Sir Andrew Freeport is, as his name implies, quite wealthy. Both papers maintain periodicals, and reading in general, as reserved for those with leisure to enjoy them without jeopardizing their livelihoods.

and in the name of whom men of conflicting interests could unite” (119). The universal voice of the periodical’s “we,” thus claims to include women, “while simultaneously objectifying them” (120). Even more paradoxically, the stereotypical interests of women (i.e. fashion, high society gossip) are addressed by Will Honeycomb, a misogynistic libertine and persistent ladies man – hardly the sort of person who might be said to represent the best interests of the ladies themselves. Mr. Spectator jokingly confesses as much in Honeycomb’s sketch: “To conclude his character, where women are not concerned, he is an honest worthy man” (S2, 1:12).

Always already regarded as alien objects of desire, if not with outright suspicion within the coffeehouse space, *The Spectator*’s female readers participate by submitting to the Spectator’s promise to “point out all those Imperfections that are the Blemishes, as well as those virtues which are the Embellishments, of the Sex” (S10, 1:46). Through countless one-dimensional, Theophrastian (that is, didactic stereotype) character sketches, female readers are complicit in their own objectification as they observe themselves through Mr. Spectator’s penetrating stare. A particular vignette in *Spectator* No. 4 symbolizes this text-reader relationship. Caricaturizing himself as universally disregarded for his bizarre silence (he is publically known only as “that strange fellow!”), Mr. Spectator describes a humorous episode emblematic of his role as silent looker-on. He has “indulged [his] silence to such an extravagance,” that his friends interpret his face as if he were actually speaking. They “answer my smiles with concurrent sentences, and argue to the very point I shook my head at, without my speaking.” At the playhouse one night with Will Honeycomb, Mr. Spectator’s dumb show creates an amusingly symbolic spectacle, worth close attention (S4, 1:19):

The gentleman [next to Will] believed Will was talking to himself, when upon my looking with great approbation at a young thing in a box before us, he said, ‘I am quite of another opinion. She has, I will allow, a very pleasing aspect, but methinks, that simplicity in her countenance is rather childish than innocent.’ When I observed her a second time, he said, ‘I grant her dress is very becoming, but perhaps the merit of that choice is owing to her mother; for though, continued he, *I allow a beauty to be as much to be commended for the elegance of her dress, as a wit for that of his language*; yet if she has stolen the colour of her ribbands from another, or had advice about her trimmings, I shall not allow her the praise of dress, *anymore than I would call a plagiarist an author*.’ When I threw my eye towards the next woman to her, Will spoke what I looked, according to his romantic imagination, in the following manner:

‘Behold, you who dare, that charming virgin; behold the beauty of her person chastised by the innocence of her thoughts. Chastity, good-nature, and affability, are the graces that play in her countenance; she knows she is handsome, but she

knows she is good. Conscious beauty adorned with conscious virtue! What a spirit is there in those eyes! What a bloom in that person! How is the whole woman expressed in her appearance! Her air has the beauty of motion, and *her look the force of language.*'

It was prudence to turn away my eyes from this object, and therefore I turned them to the thoughtless creatures who make up the lump of that sex, and *move a knowing eye no more than the portraits of insignificant people by ordinary painters, which are but pictures of pictures.* (S4, 1:20, emphasis mine)

I quote this passage at length because it replicates, in a single scene, the whole of Addison and Steele's periodical as it relates to women. Distinctly *not* in a coffeehouse, Mr. Spectator's "knowing eye" here peruses the playhouse audience in perfect parallel to his spectatorial relationship with female readers— perhaps intentionally so. The scene also stages the equally paradoxical effect of his "lectures" for the improvement of the "thoughtless creatures" among his reading audience who might identify with those "portraits of insignificant people" he sees at the theater. For, as Mr. Spectator himself declares, his "fraternity of Spectators" should be "every one that considers the world as a theatre, and desires to form a right judgment of those who are the actors on it" (S10, 1:46). As the Spectator ogles the pretty women about him, Honeycomb's running commentary reveals his interests as purely visual. The Spectator claims to interpret the "virgins" of his audience by their faces and fashions just as precisely as his bosom friend interprets him. The priceless characteristics of "Chastity, good-nature, and affability," "adorn" the women like lustrous commodities – or, perhaps more telling, such graceful looks *speak* with "the force of language." And so, however innocent of their own attractions the Spectator encourages women to be, however much he may insist that lasting affections cannot be won by a look, the only expression he grants them of their "inward Ornaments" is the language of the eyes. A woman's rhetoric is her face. Ironically, in vignette after vignette, Mr. Spectator and his correspondents present women with ideal "pictures" of themselves for their study and emulation. *The Spectator* thus enacts the very scenario its persona appears to mock, constructing "pictures of pictures," training the eyes of his male readers so that they may knowingly pass over those women whose behaviors signal conscious deployment of their own power as beauties, or as we shall see, of their own *masculine* intellect as orators (S4, 1:20).

Were his readers always so complicit? Letters like Barbara Creabtree's – even if fictional – suggest otherwise. Rosalinda, another correspondent, ironically bemoans her own good looks

as forever barring her from membership in The Ugly Club, so highly applauded by Mr. Spectator as composed of the “noble spirits of the age.” She writes:

I am in every respect one of the handsomest young girls about town, I need be particular in nothing but the make of my face, which has the misfortune to be exactly oval. This I take to proceed from a temper that naturally inclines me both to speak and hear.

[...]you may wonder how I can have the vanity to offer myself as candidate [...] I don't want to be put in mind how very defective I am in every thing that is ugly: I am too sensible of my own unworthiness in this particular, and therefore I only propose myself as a foil to the club.

You see how honest I have been to confess all my imperfections, which is a great deal to come from a woman, and what I hope you will encourage with the favour of your interest. (S87, 2:267-268)

Rosalinda concludes by ironically assuring the Spectator that “a joint-stool in the very lowest place at the table is all the honor” that she “covets,” adding in her post-script that she has dutifully followed his advice to the fair sex on two other points, as well. In accordance with his wish that women would show their patriotism by donating jewelry to the war efforts, rather than enter political discussions or patch their faces according to their political sympathies, she declares, “I have sacrificed my necklace [...] against the common enemy,” and “began to patch indifferently on both sides of my face” (S87, 2:268).¹⁵ Rosalinda's overstated obedience to Mr. Spectator's dictates is certainly ironic. Whether invented by Addison and Steele themselves, or actually submitted by a witty correspondent, the point remains the same: Such letters express the sense women may have of the Spectator Club as beyond their reach.

The Republic of Letters: Salon Mythos, or, An Institution of “Good Company”

The desire to form an institution of “good company,” through which all other things civilized are achievable, certainly agrees with Addison and Steele's aspirations for the coffeehouse/club of *The Spectator*. But such “institutions” already existed; the French called them salons. Edmond

¹⁵ In *Spectator* no. 81, Mr. Spectator comments disapprovingly on party spirit among women, singling out a woman whom he calls Rosalinda as one of those partisan women who wear fashionable patches according to the political party they favor. He suggests that Englishwomen “sacrifice every one her necklace against the common enemy,” instead of involving themselves in political debate (S81, 2:244). By calling herself Rosalinda, the correspondent I quote above likely pretends to be the same female partisan he refers to in that earlier number.

and Jules de Goncourt offer a romantic description of the “good company” to be found in the eighteenth-century salon:

A sort of association of the sexes, formed for the purpose of distinguishing itself from bad company [...] by the perfection of its charm and conviviality, the urbanity of its usages, by an art of tact, indulgence and worldly wisdom [...] it set the tone of conversation; it taught how to praise without disdain or affecting it, how to appreciate others without seeming to patronize them; it mastered, and made those whom it numbered master, innumerable refinements of speech, thought, and even of feeling, thanks to which discussion could never turn into dispute or slander degrade into malice...¹⁶

According to Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, the salon was not only “the mentor of civilized living,” or a barometer of taste; it was a moral code, “promoting virtues of custom and conduct, by entertaining a spirit of self-respect” and “honor” (44). Thus the French salon, both in reality and romanticized myth, represents all that Addison and Steele hoped to achieve through the civilized discourse of the coffeehouse, and the Other against which they sought to define that public/private space. Addison and Steele would never have associated their enterprise with salon culture for two important reasons: first, the salon was French and the province of the elite, and therefore symbolic of effeminacy, foppery, and levity; and second, the salonnières orchestrating the composition of “good company” were women. As both Cowan and Maurer note, *The Spectator* is obsessed with cleansing the coffeehouse, and men, of female and French contaminants. Effeminacy and France seem to go hand in hand for Mr. Spectator, who accuses French fashion of effeminizing men and reducing them to fops, and women of reducing themselves to frivolous coquettes for the love of French fashion. Nor does the Spectator stop at hairstyles and hoopskirts; for him French fashion includes habits of conversation and inappropriately liberal mixing of the sexes.

Nevertheless, the spatial significance of the salon, with its myth of female political power and its conversational rhetoric, meant something far different for eighteenth-century Englishmen than it did for Englishwomen. It is therefore necessary to expand our view of the salon from the concept of conversational rhetoric outlined in Chapter One, to a concept of ideological space in

¹⁶ Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *The woman of the eighteenth century; her life, from birth to death, her love, and her philosophy in the worlds of salon, shop, and street*, trans. Jacques le Clercq and Ralph Roeder (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), 44. Subsequent references to this source will be cited in parentheses by page number.

which salon rhetoric is just one of the many possibilities of existence. Exploring the real and imaginary space of the French salon, as well as its perception in the eyes of outsiders, reveals the ways in which this French cultural institution represents the repressed feminine space through which *The Spectator* claims authority over the civilization of discourse, manners, and more specifically, over the domestication of women. My reading of the French salon as an alternative “public sphere” with which the London coffeehouse might be said to compete allows us to consider the ways in which these competing fantasies contend over male and female agency, autonomy, and sexual “nature.” The spatial nature of the salon, in its public-private locus, its political and intellectual discourse, and its feminocentric construct, thus represents an ideal model through which *The Female Spectator* rewrites *The Spectator* project, and subverts Addison and Steele’s Theophrastian female dichotomies.

To a certain extent, the salon perpetuated a powerful imaginary space, even within its own culture. First conceived by Catherine de Vivonne, marquise de Rambouillet (1588-1665) “as an architectural framework for a new kind of sociability,” the salon became a physical extension of the Enlightenment ‘Republic of Letters’ through which men and women of Rambouillet’s aristocratic circle might mingle with the *philosophes* of the age (Kale, 4). As such, the salon “encouraged socializing between the sexes, brought nobles and bourgeois together, and afforded opportunities for intellectual speculation,” surviving centuries of social change while retaining its basic structural features (Kale, 2). Steven Kale, in *French salons: high society and political sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848*, describes these features as, “a luxurious space, feminine governance, a select company, and polite conversation” where participants might enjoy philosophical debate one day, poetry, art, and theatrical representation another. “Linked in the public mind to widely accepted ‘feminine’ characteristics,” Kale notes, salons “came to be idealized by generations of male writers, artists, intellectuals, and politicians as protected spaces for the reconciliation of differences whose neutrality was guaranteed by the self-effacement and devotion to propriety of the salonnière” (3). Furthermore, the salon occupied a socio-cultural borderland between established customs and beliefs, and emerging ideas. Kale writes: “As a flexible vehicle [...] existing on the margins of public life, the salon was able to accommodate activities and anticipate forms of interaction that were being created.” As such, the salon tended to defy description, most attempts ending in analogy. For example, “the salon was like a royal court, a university, an academy [...] a medium

of communication,” etc. Thus, the legacy of the salon was very much a thing of myth, both in France and abroad, almost from the time of its inception (4). It seems clear that the salon represented a neutral space for political negotiation, intellectual innovation, literary advancement, and cultural refinement between the middle and upper classes of society that the London coffeehouse sought to parallel. The salon – real or imagined – positioned women as agents and participants, rather than as objects or passive observers, of such activity.

According to Kale, the Marquise de Rambouillet, and the salonnières who succeeded her (known as the *précieuses*), worked to “foster civility” and “restore the image of women” by “affirming their right to consideration, independence, and learning.” Thus,

salons became sites for two forms of innovation: the contestation of social conventions and the discussion of progressive ideas. Not only did seventeenth-century salonnières encourage novel social encounters, they challenged traditional notions of marriage and maternity, advocated unions based on love, and emphasized the importance of individual autonomy. At the same time, their women-centered gatherings cultivated both the new science and the priority of female learning while testing discursive boundaries that were shortly to deny women equal access to intellectual life. The result was an original creation: an institution in which the freedom and creativity necessary to generate new literary genres, fresh humanistic ideals, a feminist sensibility, and the opportunity to refine one’s taste and sharpen one’s wit existed side by side with an obsession with propriety, status, and *bienséance* that tended to contain and modulate the subversive impulses for which it often provided an initial hearing. (17-18)

Kale suggests that this balance between subversion and constraint leaned “decisively in the direction” of constraint by the eighteenth century, as “social forces hostile to political ferment and the autonomy of women” grew, leaving women with “the discourse of polite society.” On the one hand, this shift to some extent reduced the femino-centric nature of the salon as it became dominated by “literary and linguistic arbitration,” and the “passivity of philosophical conversation” (18). But on the other hand, women of the salon grew steadily more intelligent and well read as a result of their increased access to the intellectual and political discourse of men (12). Furthermore, as a place where public and private spheres meet, Kale maintains that the salons and their salonnières institutionalized a “public role for women at a time when other avenues for feminine expression were vanishing and when the salon’s clientele among the elite were mobilizing intellectually and politically to challenge absolutism” (19). Ideally, Kale writes, the salon was itself “a work of art” (22) in which individuals were “selected by the salonnière for

compatibilities and contrasts likely to produce the most interesting and harmonious conversation” (21). Salonnières held the exclusive “power of selection to achieve the right mix,” the “power to arrange” her guests so as to forward the goal of the meeting, whether political, philosophical, or literary. Such agency made “each salon an act of self-expression,” and “the salonnière the author” (22). Once the salon was established in the cultural imaginary as female-centered institution, the salonnières that followed rather “styled” their gatherings after the spirit of their predecessors, thus perpetuating the sense in which the salon was both myth and reality (21).

Scholars such as Dena Goodman and Erica Harth have suggested that the eighteenth-century salonnières simply presided over a “masculine star system,” solidifying the “centrality of men in the actions of women.”¹⁷ In Kale’s view, however, this is an empty criticism. The fact remains that it was the salonnière’s successful arrangement of “good company,” her ability to achieve and maintain the high regard of society – public and private – and her own orchestration of conversational space that compelled male attendance. As Kale puts it: “it was not men who were central to her actions but rather the fame and success of her salon, which was her own creation” (28). She was a composer, an artist, weaving a tapestry of “collective being” in her choice of talented and intelligent guests (23). Her “genius” was in her “ability to maintain a delicate balance between exclusivity and openness, between ‘inclusions’ and ‘exclusion’” (9). Experts in the cultivation of observation and character analysis, salonnières not only excelled at the literary character sketch, they also made good judges of unknown writing and artistic talent, helping them to gain a footing in their professions by introducing them to notice among the right groups (27). The salonnière was also a “wise legislator,” or “a kind of literary and social administrator” (23). Thus, the eighteenth-century salon was a “convergence of female and philosophical ambition” through which salonnières “satisfied their educational needs in what amounted to a ‘surrogate university’ and *philosophes* acquired an institutional base” (27).

In terms of politics, the aura of influence surrounding the salonnières was formidable, though albeit “something of an optical illusion” (40). Kale notes that serious, open political engagement among salonnières was regarded with suspicions of illegitimacy (5). These *Femmes*

¹⁷ Erica Harth, *Cartesian women: versions and subversions of rational discourse in the old regime* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 33; Dena Goodman, *The republic of letters: a cultural history of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 75.

politiques were rare, despite the fact that literature had “mythologized French conversation and contributed to the consolidation of the main lines of an aristocratic feminism, suggestively associating the salon with feminine political power” (219). Adeline Daumard similarly regards the idea that “women held the key to power and imposed their tastes, preferences, and ideas, notably in political matters,” as “legend” (quoted in Kale 8). But this suggestive mythos is precisely the point of the salon’s powerful spatial promise for educated, well-read eighteenth-century women like Eliza Haywood. The centrality of the salon in French culture, and women’s centrality therein, made the French – unlike the English – “resistant” to characterizations of women, and femininity as the seat of “social disorder” (13). Madame de Staël imagined women as the directors of a fusion between politics and polite conversation in her 1789 salon, where important intellectual and political discussion would flow between men and women for the good of all (Kale, 224). Delphine de Girardin called her ideal salon “a port surrounded by protective rocks, against which the waves of envy break; it is an arsenal where weapons of all kinds find themselves assembled, without anger, ostentation, or bravado, always ready to defend the worthy against the worthless” (qtd. in Kale, 225). The appeal for an Englishwoman is obvious. The popular perception of “[French] women’s control of the empire of conversation,” bolstered by the reality of their upper-class – and even bourgeois – intellectual eloquence, their liberal access to and activity in the Republic of Letters, and their visible agency as salonnières, made France and its salons the stuff of fantasy for those Englishwomen privileged enough to visit or read about them (de Goncourt, 44).

Edmond and Jules de Goncourts’s nostalgic account of this mythos suggests how the role of women in France may have been perceived by an author like Haywood: “No catastrophe, no scandal, no lofty deed but emanated from her during a century that [woman] filled with prodigies, wonderment and adventure” (243). These women, they continue, “form a kind of republic whose ever active members succor and serve one another reciprocally: they are a new state, as it were, within the state” (245). Finally, the de Goncourt’s crown their history of eighteenth-century women and salons as entities of unmatched matriarchal power: “As this protection of writers, this presidency of letters, this government of men and the works of their minds, embraced both men and art, no manifestation of the age remained without the domination of woman” (266). Elizabeth Montagu’s visit to Paris in 1776 collaborates with the perception of intellectual freedom and activity salon culture offered women, on a much more basic level.

Echoing the observations of Philenia in *The Female Spectator*,¹⁸ in which a young woman writes longingly of the “Advantage a French Lady reaps from her Regard for [and conversation with] Men of Learning” (*FS*12, II:2, 417), Montagu was markedly impressed by the conversation she met with during her visit as compared to that generally open to women in London society. She writes, “I have not spent a dull or insipid hour in company since I came to Paris.”¹⁹ Like Mrs. Spectator’s correspondent, Montagu perceives salon society as a space in which women abandon preoccupations with “the whole Care of their Dress,” choosing instead to mingle with men “celebrated for [their] Capacity and fine Sense” who treat them with respect and engage them in stimulating, intellectual discourse (*FS*12, II:2, 416). By organizing *The Female Spectator* in the spirit of the salon as it thus appeared, Haywood simultaneously accepts, and tests, the limitations of female agency, autonomy, and rhetorical creativity in the eighteenth-century social periodical. Within the restrictions of polite female discourse and domesticity, however, *The Female Spectator*’s assumption of female centrality reclaims rational conversation as a woman’s duty and right.

The Female Spectator: Reclaiming the Conversation, or, Mr. Spectator and the Salonnière

There is nothing which I desire more than a safe and honourable peace, though at the same time I am very apprehensive of many ill consequences that may attend it. I do not mean in regard to our politics, but to our manners. What an inundation of ribbons and brocades will break in upon us? What peals of laughter and impertinence shall we be exposed to? For the prevention of these great evils, I could heartily wish, that there was an act of parliament for prohibiting the importation of French fopperies. (*S*45, 2:73)

Did not Reasons of State, which the *Spectator* must not presume to fathom, engage us at present in a War with France, I should advise to send the young Lady, too much bigotted to any one Pleasure into that polite Country, where she would find so vast a Variety, as would give a quite different Turn to her Temper, and make her despise all that before seem’d so enchanting to her. (*FS*5, II:2, 166-167)

¹⁸ For more discussion on Philenia’s letter, see my Chapter One.

¹⁹ Letter from Elizabeth Montagu to Leonard Smelt (August 1776, MO 5010, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA), quoted in Elizabeth Eger and Lucy Peltz, *Brilliant women: 18th-century bluestockings* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2008), 52.

If the feminocentric fantasy of the salon had such potential influence over *The Female Spectator*, why, one might wonder, did Eliza Haywood not openly stage her periodical as a salon – like *The Spectator* did within the space of the coffeehouse? Or, supposing that her aims may not have run so single-mindedly in the direction of the salon model, why not make more overt mention of salons, notable salonnières, and the like, in the pages of her periodical? Such obvious omissions would appear to negate any connection – inspirational or otherwise – between the salon, the Republic of Letters, and *The Female Spectator*. The two opposing passages from *The Spectator* and *The Female Spectator* quoted above suggest a reply to these questions. The first, taken from *Spectator* no. 45 “On French Fashions and Fopperies,” is just one of the many instances in which Mr. Spectator expresses hatred and anxiety over French influence on English culture. Constructing a parallel between “ribbons and brocades,” “laughter and impertinence,” Mr. Spectator reduces French “manners” and conversation to frivolous dress and a travesty of rhetoric. He explicitly declares that “[t]he female inhabitants of our island have already received very strong impressions from this ludicrous nation,” referring to the fashion of replacing the female lady’s maid with a male *valet de chambre*. Disgusted by the idea that a man should wait on a woman, or help her with her toilet, and revolted by the notion of women “receiving visits in their beds,” Mr. Spectator inadvertently reveals his anxieties against France’s liberal intermixing of the sexes in all levels of social life (S45, 2:73). His example of a Francophile is likewise telling:

Sempronia is at present the most professed admirer of the French nation, but is so modest as to admit her visitants no farther than her toilet. It is a very odd sight that beautiful creature makes, when she is talking politics with her tresses flowing about her shoulders, and examining that face in the glass, which does such execution upon all the male standers-by. How prettily does she divide her discourse between her woman and her visitants? What sprightly transitions does she make from an opera or a sermon to an ivory comb or pincushion? How have I been pleased to see her interrupted in an account of her travels, by a message to her footman; and holding her tongue in the midst of a moral reflection, by applying the tip of it to a patch? (S45, 2:74-75)

Here, Mr. Spectator reveals his disdain for the art of French conversation. The vignette reduces the salonnière’s legendary mastery of conversational rhetoric to a strategy of loose freedoms. Mr. Spectator thus maintains a position of superiority over Sempronia and her affinity for French custom by suggesting that their conversational energies inhabit inappropriate spaces, and by

sexualizing her each time she utters something intelligent. Rather than make women “*more awakened*,” he insists, French influence does nothing more than encourage women to “speak loud in public assemblies, to let every one hear you talk of things that should only be mentioned in private or in whisper, are looked upon as parts of a refined education.” And he argues that those conversational elements most attractive to women are made “unfashionable” by the French, such as “silence,” “discretion and modesty” (S45, 2:75).

As for the would-be salonnière, the Englishwoman returned from France is wont to convert even the playhouse into her own salon, talking incessantly through every performance to demonstrate “her improvement.” He complains, “She had by this time formed a little audience to herself, and fixed the attention of all about her. But as I had a mind to hear the play, I got out of the sphere of her impertinence, and planted myself in one of the remotest corners of the pit.” In short, for Mr. Spectator, the *bienséance* [decorum] of conversational rhetoric so carefully delineated in the works of Madeleine de Scudéry, and so legendary in the period, is nothing more than a gaggle of women affecting mispronunciation of “hard words” in the interest of “politeness.” Such “levity” is all well and good for the French, who are born to it, he supposes, but an Englishwoman just can’t pull it off (S45, 2:76). These “Salamanders,” he elsewhere calls them, “[admire] French good-breeding, and [are] great stickler[s] for freedom of conversation,” but as they are “cold of heart,” hardly good models for “flesh and blood” Englishwomen (S198, 3:356).

Mrs. Spectator, it would seem, absolutely disagrees. Rather than fearing that a peace might reignite an unhealthy interest in French mode, Mrs. Spectator bemoans the recent declaration of war in 1744 for the threat it poses to French influence. In fact, she recommends France as a place in which to *cure* the young woman in question, Biddy Oldfashion, of an “immoderate Love of Pleasure.” Mrs. Spectator’s quick anticipation of objection to her recommendation, however, and careful defense of her position, suggest awareness on the part of her author that Mr. Spectator’s sentiments persist. “There are two Reasons,” she explains, which make her prefer France to England in this particular. “The First,” she says, is “because whatever Time is spent in [Diversions] is so far from being wholly lost, that it is rather an Improvement, than a Diminution of the Education we have before receiv’d, as every Body must allow that knows any Thing of the Customs of that Nation.” As a foreigner, and thus promising novelty to the composition of salon society, the young woman would be “invited to partake” in all the

“Balls, Assemblies,” all the “Round of Pleasure in the Palaces of Princes, and Houses of Persons of the first Quality.” Amid such a set, however, she can expect to be “treated with the utmost Elegance and Delicacy,” avoiding the “Impertinences and Ribaldry,” that women are subjected to in the “mix’d Companies” of England’s “Places of Resort” (*FS5*, II:2, 167). She claims that, had some embarrassing mistake occurred between a young lady and young gentleman in any “of our Public Diversions,” the gentleman would have “never rested till he has gone through all the Coffee-Houses in Town, and entertain’d the Company with his Intimacy” (*FS5*, II:2, 168). For Mrs. Spectator, the coffeehouses represent a misogynistic threat to female reputation, impinging on their desire for “innocent Freedoms” and conversation between the sexes. “I am sorry to say,” she concludes,

that in England, Ladies even of the first Quality are treated with very great Indifference, except by those Men who have a Design upon them; and as for Women of inferior Condition, tho’ possess’d of the most extraordinary Talents of Mind or Body, they may shew themselves, as much as they please, in all public Places, without being able to make Themselves be taken notice of, if they allow no Hope of one Day purchasing Distinction at too dear a Rate. (*FS5*, II:2, 168-169)

Clearly, Mrs. Spectator dismisses *The Spectator*’s mantra that a woman need not concern herself with fortune or appearances to attract a worthy man. As far as Mrs. Spectator is concerned, Englishmen are after two things, money or sex, and a woman would do much better to visit France if she wishes to escape such incessant objectification.

Within the first essay of Book I, Mrs. Spectator can be seen to express the highest opinion of France for no other reason than its apparently superior treatment of women, and the higher respect they enjoy in French society in general. More socially “alert,” and allowing “the greatest Liberties to their Women,” she insists that the French are nevertheless morally *superior* to the English by virtue of the trust their Husbands allot to their wives (*FS1*, II:2, 28). These sentiments are couched, however, *within* the discourse of Haywood’s periodical, rather than established as foundational to her endeavor – and for good reason. Any overt gesture of relationship between Mrs. Spectator and the *précieuses* of the salons would certainly jeopardize Haywood’s English readership. So fearsome was the stigma of female intellectual ambition in England, that even the women of the “bluestocking circle” (whose origins, incidentally, coincide with the printing of *The Female Spectator*) feared association with the salonnières. In her study

of the Bluestocking Circle, Sylvia Harcstark Myers relates an anecdote involving Jemima Campbell, later Marchioness Grey, taken from a letter she wrote to close friend, and Bluestocking, Catherine Talbot. The brief scene is indicative of the anxiety Lady Grey felt at being labeled as a learned woman, a label distinguished by French influence: “She swallowed her tea and escaped [the discussion on ‘Electrical Experiments’], hoping she did not leave behind her ‘the Character of *Préceiuse, Femme Sçavante*, Linguist, Poetess, Mathematician, & any other name.’”²⁰ Similarly, in composing *The Female Spectator*, Haywood would wish to avoid associating the Female Spectator eidolon with “the Character of *Préceiuse, Femme Sçavante*, Linguist, Poetess, Mathematician,” etc. even as Mrs. Spectator exercised their qualities.

This is emblematic of the position of tacit difference between the rhetorical stance of Spectator/Female Spectator, made possible by the spatial constructs of coffeehouse gentleman/salonnaire. On the one hand claiming to imitate “my learned Brother of ever precious Memory,”²¹ Mr. Spectator, the Female Spectator actually begins her “lucubrations” as if in parody of her “brother’s” ironic correspondent, Rosalinda. She could be vying for that coveted “joint-stool in the very lowest place” at the Ugly Club table, when she declares (S87, 2:268):

I shall, in the first place, assure him [the reader], that for my own Part, I never was a Beauty, and am now very far from being young; (a Confession he will find few of my Sex ready to make:) I shall also acknowledge, that I have run through as many Scenes of Vanity and Folly as the greatest Coquet of them all. – Dress, Equipage, and Flattery, were the Idols of my Heart. – I should have thought that Day lost which did not present me with some new Opportunity of shewing myself. – My Life, for some Years, was a continued Round of what I then called Pleasure, and my whole Time engross’d by a Hurry of promiscuous Diversions. (FS1, II:2, 17-18)

In this brief character sketch, Mr. Spectator’s own “sister” openly confesses every feminine fault so detestable to Mr. Spectator. Fortunately for the Female Spectator – or perhaps for her brother – he is dead. On the other hand, Mrs. Spectator presents herself as the ultimate example of

²⁰Sylvia Harcstark Myers, *The bluestocking circle: women, friendship, and the life of the mind in eighteenth-century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 5.

²¹ Patricia Meyer Spacks, in her notes to *The Selections from The Female Spectator*, suggests that the phrase “of ever precious Memory” is “conventionally used with reference to the dead,” 7. Kathryn King, in her notes to the Pickering & Chatto edition of *The Female Spectator*, suggests that the Female Spectator’s reference to the Spectator as “brother” indicates her membership in the late Addison and Steele’s “fraternity of Spectators,” rather than a familial relationship (*Spectator* No.10, 1: 45), II:2, 446.

female folly, reformed, as if she – like Rosalinda – had seen the error of her ways, donated her jewelry to the war against France, and “began to patch indifferently” (S87, 2:268). Although it cannot be suggested that Haywood’s intention is entirely tongue-in-cheek, such parallels are moments of difference between *The Female Spectator*’s orientation in regard to women, and *The Spectator*’s. Where Addison and Steele seek to ogle and ridicule women out of their follies, and educate them in domestic passivity and charming silence, Haywood approaches the social dilemmas faced by women (and men), young and old, first and foremost as their sympathizer and advisor. Only peripherally interested in critiquing fashion or foppery, she quickly underscores the (especially) female reality, relying on sentimental narratives to convey a sense of immediacy and compassion for the behaviors in both sexes that she hopes to reform. And finally, Haywood’s portrayal of women’s agency in the domestic sphere and their claims to erudition and rational conversation suggests nothing of the sneering reference to teary-eyed, henpecking wives, or voracious Amazonian viragos so commonplace in Addison and Steele’s perception of “female orators.”

As Helene Koon so aptly puts it, “[t]he seemingly simple change in viewpoint profoundly affects the presentations and treatment of every subject.”²² Certainly, this female viewpoint elects a sentimental rather than a satirical approach to moral reform. Mrs. Spectator makes no secret of her distaste for ridicule in certain circumstances, suggesting that her refusal to employ satire is a stylistic choice. She writes:

The Works of a person who is looked upon as a *Satirist*, or what the *Wits* call a *Snarler*, are taken up with a kind of Prejudice, and tho’ they want not Readers, it is only because every one hopes to find his Neighbour’s Follies or Vices ridiculed there: His own are out of the Question with him, and however they may occasion his being laughed at by other People, he is utterly regardless of what is pointed at chiefly in himself. – But a Book which is not suspected of any such Tendency, yet brings a parallel Case with that of the Reader, has sometimes the good Fortune to strike upon the Soul, and awaken needful Reflection. (*FS*13, II:3, 35)

Unquestionably, Haywood and her eidolon’s decision to refrain from excessive raillery is at home with Edmond and Jules de Goncourt’s ideal depiction of “good company.” As they suggest, the “conviviality” of the salon precluded any behavior that might threaten hurt: “discussion could never turn into dispute or slander degrade into malice” (29). And, as I discussed in chapter one, salon rhetoricians like Madeleine de Scudéry taught restraint in the use

²² Koon, “Eliza Haywood and the *Female Spectator*,” 45.

of raillery, addressing it as its own mode, in need of special attention. Satire as a mode was also, it must be acknowledged, a traditionally “masculine” preserve, and yet as Mrs. Spectator’s comments imply, the decision to avoid ridiculing her own audience has nothing to do with feminine delicacy or modesty. She simply does not find it an effective tool within the discourse of her salon. Satire, as *The Spectator* employs it, depends upon reducing real men and women to “Salamanders,” “Fops,” “Coquettes,” and the like, none of whom require an examination into the individual fears, identities, limitations, and motives of the characters. They are objects, nothing more. Though the Spectator claims to see into, and strike out, the roots of every vice, the Female Spectator’s important revision implies that he has failed to accomplish his aim. Her answer is to reason with her audience, rather than ridicule them.

In her essay, “Haywood’s Spectator and the Female World,” Eve Tavor Bannet argues that Haywood “satirized, unmasked, and answered *The Spectator*’s gender politics and put men of letters like her ‘learned brother’ in the serviceable and secondary place she designed for them in her woman-centered world,” in her use of the letter format.²³ Bannet justly pinpoints the major point of divergence between Haywood and her predecessor as the impact of “*The Spectator*’s gender politics” on those “employments and Diversions” best suited to the “Fair Ones” (86). Specifically highlighting Addison and Steele’s aversion to women’s active participation in party politics,²⁴ she suggests that the reign of Queen Anne in which they wrote was characterized by those “scribbling,” “politick” women, like Abigail Hill (Duchess of Marlborough, later Lady Masham) and the Duchess of Somerset, whose influence at court “provided the greatest barriers or surest approach to the royal ear.” By making her eidolon a self-proclaimed author, Bannet argues, Haywood challenged Addison and Steele’s notion that there was anything special about their masculinity in the professional role of author they so adamantly refused to women. Further recognizing the implicit connection Haywood establishes between “the rules of civility and polite conversation” and the “heterosexual sociality of the salons and great houses” of France, Bannet credits *The Female Spectator* with effectually reproving Mr. Spectator’s “preference” for the “homosocial intimacies of their coffeehouses and clubs” (92). Instead, Haywood constructs her own Republic of Letters in which she effectively

²³Eve Tavor Bannet, “Haywood’s Spectator and the female World,” in *Fair Philosopher*, 82-103. Subsequent references to this source are cited in parenthesis by page number.

²⁴ See, for example, *Spectator* nos. 57, 81, 128, 176.

demonstrates the superiority of the salonnière to improve the lives of her readers through the civilizing rhetoric of polite discourse.

Answering *The Spectator* in letter-for-letter fashion, *The Female Spectator* restages Mr. Spectator's satirical reproofs and Theophrastian models, presenting them from a rational standpoint of sympathetic conversation that rejects, rather than endorses, the Spectator's ogling, satirical gaze. For example, where the Spectator warns against masquerades as "wonderfully contriv'd for the advancement of cuckoldom," or as places in which common whores may pass themselves off as ladies of quality to unsuspecting men (S8, 1:37). Mrs. Spectator suggests these diversions as the sites of male predation. "[T]he Men are so censorious," she complains, "that they look on all those of our Sex, who appear too much at these public Places, as setting themselves up for Sale, and, therefore, taking the Privilege of Buyers, measure us with their Eyes from Head to Foot" (FS5, II:2, 171). Men, she implies, like the Spectator at the playhouse, "gaze" on women in such a "scrutinous Manner," that *their* eyes are "no less significant than the most rude Words could be" (FS5, II:2, 171-2). Worse, is the threat that men may use the anonymity of the masquerade to push their predatory spectatorship to a physical extreme, as in the story of Erminia, where a young woman is duped at her first masquerade, and violently raped (FS1, II:2, 40).

When M.T. writes to the Spectator, insisting that she is "young, and very much inclined to follow the paths of innocence; but at the same time, as I have a plentiful fortune, and am of quality, I am unwilling to resign the pleasures of distinction, some little satisfaction in being admired" in favor of immediate matrimony, Mr. Spectator accuses her of coquetry, frivolity, and of not knowing her own mind. In response to her desire to see "whether I may like any one else better," than her current suitor, the Spectator claims that young women such as herself will never be pleased, will certainly choose the worst man possible, and ought to remember that they should marry before they lose their charms to old age (S79, 2:233). Mrs. Spectator's version of this dilemma is far more insightful. Recognizing women's desire to prolong courtship as a means of retaining subjectivity and power in a relationship, she attempts to reason with women on their own terms: "nothing is so much desired by women as to have their own will; but as it is impossible for any one, of what station soever, to enjoy it in every thing, we ought to consider and endure to be debarr'd from it, and not hazard the highest wish our souls can form..." (FS5, II:2, 182). Though she agrees with the Spectator that overindulgence in "the modish Diversions

of the Age” will never “engage or preserve” the love of a man of sense, she nevertheless speculates that, were English society more like France, where “People of Fashion have [...] frequent Entertainments of this Nature at their own Houses; where only select Companies being admitted,” no “Mischiefs” could ensue, then women might enjoy all pleasant conversation with “Men of Honour” without “Remorse of Anxiety” (*FS5*, II:2, 183). Furthermore, in staging this conflict as a narrative between two lovers, Amasina and Palamon, she makes clear that her advice applies only when the woman actually loves and esteems her suitor. For, marriage should not be entered into lightly for the Female Spectator, as her careful advice to both virgins and widows on that score suggests. In Book VIII, she warns: “marriage is a kind of precipice [...] wary ought the person who stands upon it be, lest, instead of a delightful valley enamel’d with flowers, blooming with perpetual sweets, she plunges not into one where thornes and briars are only shadowed over with a few gaudy tulips and tall sunflowers” (*FS8*, II:2, 291).²⁵

Perhaps even more importantly, however, is *The Female Spectator*’s revision of *The Spectator*’s systematic presentation of “a kind of Sex in the very Soul,” which bars women from true rhetoric and rational discourse – among other things. Besides declaring women to be natural creatures of emotional “Vivacity,” while men are naturally grave (*S128*, 3: 32), the periodical suggests a more misogynistic picture of sexual nature in its allusions to Simonedes’ Characters of Women. Perhaps discrediting authors on French conversation, like Madeleine de Scudéry, who traced the tenet of *bienséance* to “the ancients,” Mr. Spectator begins his translation of Simonedes with the disclaimer that this ancient most certainly ignored such decorous considerations (*S209*, 3:410). But the apology sounds hollow when one considers his female audience’s reaction to such speculations as: “In the beginning God made the souls of womankind out of different materials, and in a separate state from their bodies. [...] The souls of one kind of women were formed out of those ingredients which compose a swine” (*S209*, 3:411). He goes on to link various female characters with souls of foxes, canines, earth, sea, ass, cat, mare, ape, and finally the bee. “Happy is the man who gets such an one for his wife” as the bee (*S209*, 3:412). After discovering, thanks to this commendable satire, that there is but one female soul for which a man can be grateful, this bee, it comes as no surprise that the Female Spectator’s

²⁵ For an example of the contrast between *The Spectator* and *The Female Spectator*’s advice to maiden and widowed correspondents on the subject of choosing a husband, see *Spectator* Nos. 149, 196, and 605; and *Female Spectator* Book VIII, IV, and XVI.

correspondent, Cleora, openly declares “[t]here is, undoubtedly, no Sexes in Souls, and we are able to receive and practice the Impressions” of religion, science, and philosophy as men (*FS10*, II:2, 355). *The Female Spectator* takes pains to support this idea, and to refute *The Spectator*’s concept of female reason and rhetoric as either sexual, or irrational and insignificant.

Mockingly acknowledging that a woman, Aspasia, might have trained Socrates in eloquence, Mr. Spectator suggests that “She Professors” ought to be appointed teachers of rhetoric at the Universities. He goes on to give the lie to this statement by once again debasing the proud statement of Madeleine de Scudéry that “the art of speaking well about trifles is not known to all sorts of people”:²⁶ “It has been said in the praise of some men, that they could talk whole hours together upon any thing; but it must be owned to the honour of the other sex, that there are many among them who can talk whole hours together upon nothing” (*S247*, 4:178). The several rhetorical skills unique to women he lists as the “censorious,” the “gossips,” the “coquettes,” and finally the “news-mongers, politicians, mimics, story-tellers,” who – as they are found equally in men – he passes “over in silence” (*S247*, 4:179). The undercurrent of misogyny in this essay is truly disturbing. Claiming to have an experimentally minded friend whose interests are bent upon discovering the secret springs of female rhetoric, Mr. Spectator goes on to describe this friend’s proposal to dissect a woman’s tongue “to examine whether there may not be in it certain juices which render it so wonderfully voluble or flippant, or whether the fibres of it may not be made up of a finer or more pliant thread” (*S247*, 4:180). Such scientific speculation is then echoed in other misogynistic authorities, like Ovid’s image of a woman’s severed tongue, still talking. Mr. Spectator seems only half sincere in concluding, “I must confess I am so wonderfully charmed with the music of this little instrument [the female tongue], that I would by no means discourage it.” – intending only to “cure it of several disagreeable notes.” And yet the lingering picture of a woman’s disembodied tongue as that “little instrument” with which he pretends to be “charmed” is absolutely sinister (*S247*, 4:182).

Mrs. Spectator’s embodiment of the Female Orator seeks not only to overwrite the impression of this gruesome spectacle from the cultural imaginary, but also to admonish those men who doubt the abilities of female orators, and stifle the advancement of female learning –

²⁶ Quoted in Jane Donawerth, “‘As Becomes a Rational Woman to Speak’ Madeleine de Scudéry’s Rhetoric of Conversation,” in *Listening to Their Voices: The Rhetorical Activities of Historical Women*, ed. Molly Meijer Wertheimer (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 314.

men, undoubtedly, like Mr. Spectator. “Wishing that several writers of that sex [women] had chosen to apply themselves rather to tapestry than rhyme,” he thinks it “most proper” for ladies of “fine genius” who aspire to poetry, history, or song-writing, to ply their needles, not their pens (S606, 8:225). “[S]candal,” he claims, is the “usual attendant of tea-tables” (S606, 8:226), and she who chooses to test her wit or her pen therein risks a scalding by her own spilt tea (S57, 2:128). So much for the general opinion of the coffeehouse. Predictably, the requests of female readers for Mr. Spectator’s recommendations for a “female Library,” are ignored,²⁷ forestalled, and finally treated by a cursory collection of works suggested by book-sellers, husbands, and a stereotypical smattering of ladies more interested in romances and plays. Those books “proposed by men of learning,” however, especially one A.B. who the Spectator takes pains to thank, are entirely omitted and never directly mentioned again. “[A]s I have taken the ladies under my particular care,” he assures them, “I shall make it my business to find out in the best authors, ancient and modern, such passages as may be for their uses,” hoping they will “pardon me, if from time to time I laugh at those little vanities and follies which appear in the behaviours of some of them” (S92, 2:289). Of course, if his penchant for ancient texts about severed tongues and fruitful tapestries are any indication, the women of his audience may need more than a healthy patience to grant that pardon.

But whatever happened to A.B. and the many recommendations of learned men? Silenced as effectively as the Female Orators of *The Spectator*, A.B., and all like-minded men in his audience, have no opportunity to suggest that women might be capable of – or interested in – more than the management of a recalcitrant husband.²⁸ Is it coincidence, then, that a man styling himself A.B. contributes *The Female Spectator*’s most interesting example of female oratory and political debate? Opening Book IX, and offered as “a Challenge” to the now much-studied letter from Curioso Politico of Book VIII,²⁹ A.B.’s letter establishes him as a ‘man of

²⁷ Mr. Spectator is first thus solicited in *Spectator* No. 79.

²⁸ In *Spectator* No. 302, one of the few letters from male correspondents in praise of female management, describes Emilia’s reformation of her husband’s ill-nature and maltreatment through patience, and cleverly subversive behavioral conditioning.

²⁹ For excellent analyses of Curioso Politico’s attack upon the Female Spectator’s failure to engage politics, see Earla Wilputte, “‘Too ticklish to meddle with’: The Silencing of *The Female Spectator*’s Political Correspondents,” in *Fair Philosopher*, 22-140; Kathryn King, “Patriot or Opportunist? Eliza Haywood and the Politics of *The Female Spectator*,” in *Fair Philosopher*, 104-121; and Eve Tavor Bannet, “Haywood’s Spectator and the female World.”

learning' with an avid respect for female intelligence and conversation (*FS9*, II:2, 301). Having been so utterly impressed by the "Good Sense and Eloquence" of a political debate between two women at a "polite Assembly," he "had faithfully treasured up" every word in his memory, for publication in *The Female Spectator*. Both women, he explains, "were indeed so equally capable of managing what they undertook, that the rest of the Company took too much Pleasure in hearing them, to offer any Interruption." They are so skilled, "so perswasively pathetic," that his "Reason yielded to them both by Turns [...] Every Argument urg'd by each of these fair Antagonists had greater force with me, than all Tully's Orations, even tho' I had heard them delivr'd by himself." Finally, he ends his introductory letter by soliciting Mrs. Spectator's own analysis on the discussion, begging her to correct any "errors, either as to Matters of Fact, or the Terms in which they are made mention of," clearly suggesting a regard for Mrs. Spectator worthy of a salonnière (*FS9*, II:2, 302).

Not surprisingly, in the "Dialogue Between An English and a Hanoverian Lady," both women maintain the conventions of conversational rhetoric, addressing each particular of their 'adversary's' argument in a rational dialectic, which unfolds as an elastic point and counterpoint, rather than a series of monologues. It is the Englishwoman, however, who maintains the strictest adherence to the "agreeable" ideal. When for example, at one point in the conversation, the Hanoverian Lady cannot help but scoff, "Meer Jealousy and groundless Apprehensions!", the English Lady displays perfect *bienséance*, allowing some ground to her friend, but ultimately disproving her point: "Undoubtedly, Madam, - I grant also that the Apprehensions you mention are fully justified by Reason; -- but then that they are so is one of those Misfortunes to us of which you are the innocent Cause" (*FS9*, II:2, 313). She likewise observes the most Scudérian sense of *topoi*, in which all topics are not fit for all company – or all rhetors – when she demurs, "I have this Consolation, that those Replies which are improper for me to make may be found in the Speeches of several of our most worthy Representatives in Parliament" (*FS9*, II:2, 305). To crown the whole, the debate resolves in Scudérian fashion, as well. Neither lady achieves absolute victory, and the English Lady employs her last words in simultaneously conceding her opponent's previous point and calling it into question by quoting a stanza from *Oedipus Rex*. Thus, the arguments of each, combined, form a discussion open to the perspectives and the contemplation of the audience (*FS9*, II:2, 315).

Truly, *The Female Spectator* is a Republic of Letters, a salon, in a monthly periodical, where men like A.B. – whether real or imaginary – play a pivotal role in drawing out, engaging, and supporting female intellect and conversation. For this reason, Bannett’s assertion that Haywood relegates “men of letters” to the “serviceable and secondary place she designed for the in her woman-centered world” misses the point. Though she may compose her own society of Spectators out of women alone, they are as salonnières, eager to welcome the most worthy and intelligent of men to form the “most interesting and harmonious conversation.” In doing so, she responds to the Spectator’s satirical speculations about the harmonious balance of the sexes. In two companion essays in which he examines “The Republic – One Consisting Entirely of Men, the Other of Women,” Mr. Spectator reduces both sexes to brutish and immodest beasts when confined to the society of their own sex (S433, 6:241). Neither are capable of diplomacy or debate, the men because they “generally managed [public debates] with kicks and cuffs” (S433, 6:243), the women because they spend all of their time at “military exercises” or because their “senate [...] of *old women*” suffers “the vapours,” “child-bearing,” and other such troubles (S434, 6:245). But in bringing these two disgusting bodies together at last in heterosexual utopia, Mr. Spectator returns women to their familiar position as objects of the male gaze, reducing their brains to “Blanks” (S4, 1:18): “...observing that the men took delight in looking upon them when they were adorned with such trappings and gewgaws, set there heads to work to find out new inventions, and to outshine one another [...] the women had learnt to smile, and the men to ogle” (S434, 6:248). The men, however, soon “by degrees improved into verse and sonnet,” and “the first rudiments of architecture, painting, and poetry, among savage people,” while the women continue to smile (S434, 6:247).

Thus *The Female Spectator* does not propose another “Female Republic.” Such an exclusion of men would be no more beneficial to women than the “Male Republic” very much in existence (despite Mr. Spectator’s irony) in the London coffeehouses, clubs, and Houses of Parliament (S434, 6:246). Instead, Haywood’s periodical draws from the heterosocial reciprocity evident in the Republic of Letters, and embodied in the mythos of the salon, in order to offer an “agreeable” alternative to the “malestream” obsessions of coffeehouse conversation (Code,

28).³⁰ As I will argue in Chapters Three and Four, Haywood's rhetorical and spatial evocation of the salon elucidates *The Female Spectator's* critical engagement with those texts most concerned with women, and women's lives in fiction and philosophy. Chapter Three follows *The Female Spectator's* conversational thread with the entertaining, but morally questionable, entertainments known as amatory novels. For young eighteenth-century women, the scandalous stimulation promised by these erotically romantic fictions was both liberating and limiting – and by the late eighteenth century, increasingly stigmatized as “tawdry”. Furthermore, these texts, with their bold depictions of female desire and sexuality, seemed to taint any woman who touched them – and especially those women who wrote them. The amatory author shared the stigmas suffered by her texts, and Eliza Haywood knew this better than most. Her numerous amatory productions were the very “first writings” that Clara Reeve's characters earnestly hoped would “be forgotten!” Nonetheless, I argue that Haywood's “first writings” were not forgotten in her more conservative periodical, but instead reinvented and preserved in more effective forms. In evoking the salon as a textual space, *The Female Spectator* simultaneously conducts a conversation within its very composition: an on-going dialogue with the “multivalent social texts” that certainly contributed to its formation. Just as the coffeehouse of *The Spectator* can be said to represent a space against which the salon of *The Female Spectator* was formed, I will show that the amatory boudoir of Haywood's first novel, *Love in Excess* (1719), likewise serves as a formative text with which the periodical is actively engaged in a process of revisionist conversation.

³⁰ Lorraine Code identifies dichotomous thinking in which masculine/feminine boundaries are starkly delineated, undermining women's cognitive authority, as “characteristic of malestream thought” in *What Can She Know?*.

CHAPTER THREE: “UTTERLY UNAMBITIOUS OF ANY LEARNING THIS WAY”: *THE FEMALE SPECTATOR* & THE REREADING OF AMATORY FICTION

Sophronia. It must be confessed that these books of the last age, were of worse tendency than any of those of the present.

Euphrasia. My dear friend, there were bad books at all times, for those who sought them. – Let us pass them over in silence.

Hortensius. No not yet. – Let me help your memory to one more lady – author of the same class. – Mrs. Heywood. – She has the same claim upon you as those you have last mentioned.

[...]

Euphrasia. ...[But] she repented of her faults, and employed the latter part of her life in expiating the offences of the former. – There is reason to believe that the two ladies we have spoken of [Aphra Behn and Delerivier Manley], seduced Mrs. Heywood into the same track; she certainly wrote some amorous novels in her youth [...], all of which I hope are forgotten.¹

As Hortensius, of Clara Reeve’s *Progress of Romance*, snidely reminds his female companions, we cannot adequately account for those writings “devoted [...] to the service of virtue” by “forgetting” those “bad books” which contributed so much to their author’s early success (121). Indeed, as Reeve’s characters show, ignoring the former necessarily limits our perception of the latter. Thus have we been limited in our critical view of *The Female Spectator*, for though open to comparing Haywood’s early and late novels, many contemporary critics seem to have maintained Reeve’s schism between the sensational novels of the young Haywood, and the “virtuous” periodical of the elder. Reading Eliza Haywood’s *The Female Spectator* as a salon space, however, suggests that we consider a “textual genealogy” other than the “chaotic” print history so troubling to Haywood scholars like Alexander Pettit – a genealogy of form. The space of the salon opens the door for a reimagining of Haywood’s periodical, as well as her career – a reimagining that Paula Backscheider sees as the future of Haywood studies. In her article “The Story of Eliza Haywood’s Novels: Caveats and Questions,” Backscheider suggests that “The Story is a barrier to addressing – even recognizing – questions with which studies of writers need

¹ Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, 1:120-121. Subsequent references the text are to this edition, and will be cited in parentheses by page number.

to be concerned.”² Rejecting “The Story,” as well as the notion that Haywood’s career should be seen as reactive to socio-cultural changes rather than proactive, Backscheider examines the forms in which Haywood worked in order to suggest that shifts in Haywood’s career can be better viewed as innovations rather than as retractions or retrenchments. She calls Haywood “the most active experimenter with fictional forms,” introducing new “themes, plots, characters, settings, and topics into English Fiction” of her generation (22). Backscheider writes:

With the coming to maturity of Haywood studies will come an increasing engagement with the questions and issues inherent in construction and agency and, inevitably, a drastic revision if not complete rewriting of The Story that has defined Eliza Haywood and her allegedly mercenary, bipolar career. (42-43)

Ten years later, studies of *The Female Spectator* are only just beginning to answer this call.

More recent Haywood scholars (some of them also among the first Haywood scholars) John Richetti, Ros Ballaster, Catherine Ingrassia, Juliet Merritt,³ and Paula Backscheider, have noticed that there are more similarities between Haywood’s early and late works than differences, particularly in terms of her concern for educating women about public and domestic gender politics. They pursue important critical avenues in which many of Haywood’s early fictions, including her first novel *Love in Excess, or The Fatal Inquiry* (1719), are considered as precursors to later fictions, usually represented by *Life’s Progress Through the Passions* (1747) and *The History of Betsy Thoughtless* (1751). Richetti, for example, accounts for Haywood’s shift in style between the 1720’s and the 1740-50’s as an attempt to “find what will work best” in relating to her reading audience.⁴ He reads the narrator’s declaration against novels in Haywood’s *Life’s Progress Through the Passions*, as a rhetorical move to evoke an image of “skeptical, disinterested empiricism,” interpreting such moralistic personae as effective in

² Paula A. Backscheider, “The Story of Eliza Haywood’s Novels: Caveats and Questions” in *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood: Essays on Her Life and Work*, eds. Kirsten T. Saxton and Rebecca P. Bocchicchio (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 19-47, 19-20.

Subsequent reference to this text will be cited in parentheses by page number.

³ John Richetti, “Histories by Eliza Haywood and Henry Fielding: Imitation and Adaptation” in *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood: Essays on Her Life and Work*, 240-258; Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women’s Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorsip, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Juliette Merritt, “Reforming the Coquet? Eliza Haywood’s Vision of a Female Epistemology” in *Fair Philosopher*, 176-192.

⁴ Richetti, “Histories by Eliza Haywood and Henry Fielding: Imitation and Adaptation,” 246.

reaching readers in new ways.⁵ More importantly, Bacscheider, Richetti, and Christine Blouch notice the dialectical – and subversively ambiguous – relationship between Haywood’s narrative and other texts in circulation.⁶ This intertextuality, they argue, suggests that both Haywood’s novels, and their readers, were involved in complex reading and rereading of popular texts. For example, Paula Bacscheider has noted the vexed relationship between the sexual politics of the amatory form itself, and a sophisticated underlying project of Haywood’s texts. She argues that within the space of amatory and romance fiction, Haywood evinces a “sophisticated understanding of reader response, literary conventions, and sexual politics” (28), a “[belief] in the power of fiction and its multiple uses,” a wish to show readers “how to read” (29), and a notion of “fiction’s part in reforming manners” (30). Thus for Haywood, literature is a powerful social force that warrants respect and attention. Bacscheider suggests that Haywood “expected her readers to be skeptical consumers aware of the self-consciousness with which writers used publication” (30-31). Perhaps most important in Bacscheider’s reading of Haywood’s career, is her identification of the problem inherent in couching such important themes within the “warm scenes” of amatory fiction. Doing so, she argues, “obscured” the “seriousness” of the message. In the later fictions, such as *Lasselia*, Bacscheider suggests that Haywood “attempts to correct the impression that the amorous scenes overbalance the larger themes” (33). Yet, Bacscheider avoids paying more than cursory attention to what I shall argue is the most comprehensive experiment in this revisionist project for Haywood’s career: *The Female Spectator*. Indeed, none of these critics have attempted to theorize *The Female Spectator* from such a perspective. Both Bacscheider and Ballaster draw piecemeal from the narratives in Book I of the periodical as bookends to their more complete examinations of the novels, but only Juliette Merritt’s epistemological examination of the coquet figure in Haywood’s *The Female Spectator* and *Betsy Thoughtless* makes any attempt to examine the periodical at length. Indeed, few such comparative studies venture further into the text than Book I, and none appear to account for the periodical as *itself* an experiment in re-presenting the themes of Haywood’s amatory texts.

In my first and second chapters, I argued that Haywood’s popular periodical was, in fact, a textual reenactment of the French salon in which the rhetoric of conversation and the spatial

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Christine Blouch, “‘What Ann Lang Read’ Eliza Haywood and Her Readers,” in *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood*, 300-325.

ideology of a salon reading situation work to expand female access to, and agency within, eighteenth-century intellectual discourse. In chapter one, I demonstrated that by enacting salon rhetoric, the Female Spectator and her correspondents unify the discourse between the periodical's twenty-four books through a Scudérian construct of "agreeable" non-oppositional dialogue, and a "natural" audience-centered sense of *topoi* [topics] and *kairos* [timeliness]; while in chapter two, I extended this rhetorical focus into an examination of the salon's spatial politics as fundamental to the periodical's reappropriation of women's right to civilizing discourse. In this chapter, I suggest that Haywood not only composes her periodical discourse after the Scudérian model, but that in it, Haywood also revises the narrative body/text of her own amatory fiction from that of seductress, to that of "decorous" salonnière. I expand my reading of *The Female Spectator* as textual salon by examining the periodical's discursive relationship with Haywood's earliest work, *Love in Excess, or The Fatal Enquiry* (1719). Building upon the work of Backscheider and Richetti, in which they separately argue Haywood's continual dialogic engagement with other forms and texts, I will suggest the salon as the ideal model through which to examine this tendency in *The Female Spectator*. From the perspective of salon discourse, the amatory novel represents an earlier voice in Haywood's on-going concern for women and women's lives. Haywood's periodical thus stages a textual dialogue – a conversation – with the amatory novel form preceding it.

As Lorraine Code argues, the importance of female novelists' ability to "write sophisticated moral philosophy long before they could claim positions as professional philosophers," suggests the novel as a locus of "moral analyses and deliberations in textured, detailed situations" for women, allowing readers to vicariously position themselves within them and comprehend them more fully. For Code, the narrative's specificity does not confuse the pursuit of knowledge, indeed, she argues that true intellectual inquiry "needs narrative to supply the particulars upon which analysis has to be based" (168). In this way, Haywood's attempt to revisit and refine the successes and (perhaps) failures of her earliest work reveals not her own moral repentance, but her urgency for the reform of socio-sexual politics – to "find what works best" in reaching a wide audience of readers through those narratives. Throughout her periodical, Haywood and her many narrative voices – Mrs. Spectator, Mira, and various correspondents – reinvent the omniscient narrative presence as well as the scenes of *Love in Excess* in new and more persuasive ways, alerting women and men alike to the dangers of the sexual double standard, and

the politics of sex, love, and marriage. Furthermore, both periodical and novel share an interest in the kind of critical, self-reflective reading that audiences must practice in order to participate in Haywood's pedagogy. Within the books of *The Female Spectator*, proto-feminist rhetoric moves from the space of the amatory boudoir and into the space of the salon, where its poignancy and potential impact are unburied at last from beneath the stigma of forbidden romance.

The Amatory Voice: Haywood and the Scudérian Romance Tradition

Romance fiction did not always project such an air of illicit sexuality, and it is important to understand the genealogy of the amatory romance form, as it grew more and more sexually contentious. This nebulous, changeable genre did present, however, a persistently feminocentric narrative that obviously appealed to female authors. As a contribution to and innovation of the heroic romances already in circulation, Haywood's first novel entered a print tradition pioneered, and dominated, by women – most notable of whom was Madeleine de Scudéry, the same author whose theory of conversational rhetoric was so foundational for *The Female Spectator*. De Scudéry's romance novels, the earliest appearing in France around 1640, set a trend in romance writing that quickly spread into England, where her novels were read in popular translations. Ros Ballaster's extensive examination of amatory genealogy is key to understanding the socio-political impact of the genre's morphology – and the morphology of Haywood's own career, as well. Ballaster's *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740*, offers a comprehensive treatment of what we have come to know as the amatory novel and its many contributing forms – particularly those of French origin. As Ballaster reveals, romance forms bore the marks of gender, agency, and social limitation from their very inception. Thus by adopting and experimenting with these forms, novelists like Haywood both expanded and contracted the boundaries of female agency through narrative fiction.

In the first place, the genre we call “amatory” (though the texts themselves went by many names) signaled femininity, potentially limiting the importance with which the text might be regarded. For Ballaster, eighteenth-century gender and genre are inextricably connected. Sex alone relegated women writers to those forms most apparently suitable to the social perception of female nature. As the goal of female life, marriage and courtship was the most important event

of a woman's existence, and therefore the most suitable direction for her pen. But in so doing, these women insisted upon positioning their feminine tales of courtship within the more authoritative masculine tales of history. The resulting "heroic romances," exemplified for Ballaster by de Scudéry's *Clelia* (1654-1661), had two main conventions: *bienséance* (decorum) and *vraisemblance* (truth to nature) – both of which were identified as specifically feminine "forms of social practice." This association between romance text and female body, she argues, seems to be the true "link between early British women's fiction and the imported French heroic romance" more so than the conventions of *bienséance* and *vraisemblance* themselves, because while British authors like Haywood often contradicted these formal conventions, the "association of both forms with peculiarly 'feminine' modes of literary productions and consumption" remained consistent.⁷ In other words, though the conventions maintained by de Scudéry may have differed from those adapted by Haywood in her early novels, the direct link between the textual characteristics of romance genres, and cultural notions of the "feminine" remained.

Therefore in both form and subject matter, romance fiction centered on women for important reasons. Though commonly dismissed by men as frivolous topics, for women, courtship and marriage were always already political endeavors with high stakes. While men could relegate romance to light entertainment, a woman's ability to alter her own circumstances was directly connected to her aptitude in resisting seduction and securing a good husband. For Ballaster,

The telling of a story of seduction is also a mode of seduction. The struggle for control over the identification and interpretation of amatory signs between male and female protagonists which is enacted on the level of content can be taken as a metaphorical substitution for the struggle for epistemological authority between male and female readers and writers of the novel on the level of form. (24)

In this way, she argues, the stakes of amatory forms are also political despite their seemingly domestic femininity. Ballaster defines *amatory* "as a means of distinguishing a particular body of narrative fiction by women which was explicitly erotic in its concentration on the representation of sentimental love" (31). The romance text's engagement with the "signs of love and their truthfulness or duplicity" (25) suggests "the struggle for political and literary authority between the two genders" (26). This makes the amatory form a contentious space for the female

⁷ Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, 43. Subsequent references to this text will be cited in parentheses by page number.

author and her reader. On the one hand, amatory texts promise women a safe space in which to slake their sexual curiosity, while gleaned potentially valuable knowledge about the politics of seduction and romance. Such tantalizing material also guaranteed a wide reading audience, since both men and women must be drawn by passion and intrigue. On the other hand, the author of amatory fiction risks dismissal as frivolous or, worse, corrupting, by exploring a topic so steeped in domesticity and sexuality. The eighteenth-century cultural fetish for female innocence seems to conflict with the amatory text's determination to "educate" women about romance, while female ignorance in general made their full understanding of seductive fiction suspect. For men, culturally speaking, there could be no question that they understood the apparent ridiculousness of romance courtship, but openly confessing a passion for amatory novels tainted masculinity with the feminine. Indeed, the romance tale enacted just that.

As popularized by de Scudéry, the romance tale claims to relate actual historical events, usually ancient or classical, that had been the stuff of "masculine" history. However, these heroic romances show more interest in the personal histories of individual characters than the events themselves. Whereas famous accounts of war and politics may only involve the great deeds of men, romances like de Scudéry's make love and women the motivators of all. The order of masculine history is thus destabilized – seduced – by the female-centered tale of love. Janet Batsleer calls this romantic fiction's "reversal of the common view of history, allowing the usually marginalized female sphere to dominate."⁸ Ballaster continues this point, suggesting that "by dehistoricizing and mythologizing the public sphere, the romantic fiction writer provides the female reader with a sense of feminine power and agency in a world usually closed to her participation" (35). It is telling, perhaps, that the French heroic romance dominated other romantic forms of the period (42).⁹ For de Scudéry's *Clelia*, femininity is the "organizing principle of the text," rather than masculine statesmanship or military prowess – on both a fictional, and metafictional level. Her idealized female heroines may represent the redemptive force of goodness in the narrative, but it is her virtual female reader who determines de

⁸ Janet Batsleer, *Rewriting English: Cultural Politics of Gender and Class*, quoted in Ballaster, 34.

⁹ Ballaster notes Charlotte Morgan's seven types of romance in late seventeenth century England as classical, chivalric, Arcadian, euphuistic, political, allegorical, and heroic. See Charlotte E. Morgan, *The Rise of the Novel of Manners: A Study of Prose Fictions between 1600 and 1740* (New York, 1911), 3-37.

Scudéry's choice of content and rhetoric.¹⁰ Their sensibilities, de Scudéry claims, are foremost in her thoughts as she composes her tale. Thus, she inverts "conventional value systems" by relocating "true heroism" from the masculine act to its motivating feminine emotion, love (46). As the fictional characters in *Clelia* relate history in conversational discourse with one another, they subvert "masculine" factual history with the "feminine" story of love and "place the heroine at its centre" (47). Civilization is not upheld by the great deeds of men, but by the romantic heroines' ability to resist her desires and avoid seduction – thus modeling virtue for both her fictional lover and her female reader. The constant repetition of sexual tension and deferral throughout the text performs the dual function of creating excitement, and reaffirming the power of femininity over masculinity. In *Clelia*, femininity means restraint and the "invincibility of women's power through their capacity to inspire ideal love." These heroines were "ideal models of virtue and rationality" that female readers should emulate (53). In *Clelia*, the character of Herminius explains that ladies may read heroic romance as a means of preventing them from "admitting of Gallants, [...] for...they would compare the love pretended to them," with the text's depiction of it, and become more discerning themselves (qtd. in Ballaster 55-56).

And so, the "polite" Scudérian romance production in its distinct femininity constructs the female as both its subject and its object. Yet interestingly, women were *not* presented as the producers of the narrative art form. Unlike the concept of the conversation so valuable to women in Scudérian philosophy, the concept of artistic creation remained a masculine preserve. Although surrounded by women with whom they converse, and especially for whom they craft their tales of love, *Clelia*'s storytellers are all men. Ironically, or perhaps pointedly, the greatest conversationalist and novelist of her day narrated tales of female power and virtue from the standpoint of masculine identity. I say pointedly, because de Scudéry's keen sense of rhetorical stance, so masterfully expressed in her other writings, suggests that she chooses to reaffirm art as a "masculine" creation for persuasive ends.¹¹ The male narrator functions as a model of

¹⁰ Gerard Prince, *Narratology: the form and functioning of narrative* (Berlin: Mouton, 1982). Gerald Prince articulates the "virtual reader" as the reader to whom the author believes s/he is writing.

¹¹ Wayne C. Booth, "The Rhetorical Stance," *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 4, no. 3 (October, 1963), 139-145, 141. Booth defines "rhetorical stance," as "a stance which depends on discovering and maintaining in any writing situation a proper balance among the three elements that are at work in any communicative effort: the available arguments about the

“feminized” masculinity, which reverences the feminine and acknowledges the importance of female conversation. But, this convention was apparently tedious for romance authors to follow. As the romance genre morphed throughout the century, female writers began to dispense with those forms de Scudéry seemed to think necessary for maintaining an image of female authorial virtue.

Ballaster refers to the most popular of these newer novels as the *histoire galante* or the *nouvelle*. These shorter tales situated themselves among more recent historical events, but rather than claiming to relate history as an excuse to digress into romantic narratives, *histoire galantes* were dedicated to relating supposedly true tales of court intrigue. Unlike heroic romances, whose claim to higher truth (*vraisemblance*) through fictional means seemed to preserve feminine delicacy (*bienséance*), *histoire galantes* claimed to be true while actually quite fictional. The idea that the characters presented “true virtue” was also abandoned, because the author needn’t answer for the “true” actions of “real” people. The form quickly replaced the heroic romance in popularity, and even Madeleine de Scudéry switched to a shorter formula in her later works. Considering the correlation between femininity and amatory form, the shift came with important socio-political consequences. According to Ballaster, “the fantasy of unlimited power” for the romantic heroine in Scudérian romance gives way to “Death, ruin, and renunciations” for the romantic heroine of the *nouvelle* or *histoire galante* who can no longer maintain a super-human resistance to the passion and seduction so dangerous to her social existence (56). Instead of offering the heroine as exemplar of civilizing virtue, the text reveals the failure of such examples to conquer “real” passion. As a result, the familiar romance pattern of sexual tension and deferral becomes increasingly erotic. Other forms, such as the *chronique scandaleuse* and the love-letter, offered similar textual stimulation. The *chronique scandaleuse* (Ballaster refers to one by Marie Catherine La Motte, Baronne d’Aulnoy) offered similar material by claiming to “spy” on the European aristocracy, providing “a faithful” and “impartial account” in the form of letters to a curious cousin back home – thus authorizing the voyeurism of the narrator. This move toward violating the private passions and desires of notable figures seems to have circulated around a similar body-text relationship between the letter itself as a feminized textual body, that could be penetrated, read, and exploited with impunity by the reader

subject itself, the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character, of the speaker.”

of the text. When combined, the love-letter, the scandal chronicle (often presented in letters), and the *nouvelle* create the ultimate feminized form – but this time, it is a form whose reputation is dangerously at risk.

This feminine embodiment of the amatory text proves to be the most empowering, and the most problematic, legacy of romance fiction for Haywood's career. As Ruth Perry argues, within the eighteenth-century imaginary, letters often act as "signifiers for the woman's body," making an unsolicited reading of a female character's letter equivalent to "mind rape" (qtd. in Ballaster 62). Within the amatory text, the letters are "the means of disclosing a secret," that might have otherwise remained locked within a character's emotional psyche. De Scudéry's Statilia, in *Clelia*, equates opening letters with opening hearts, and particularly enjoys perusing those letters belonging to others, and not intended for her eyes. Unauthorized letter reading is her way of "access[ing] secret knowledge, without incurring responsibility" (61). Furthermore, as de Scudéry's character, Plotina, reveals, the woman's letter (body) is more tantalizing than a man's, because even in her most personal and secret communications, she still cannot fully disclose her feelings. Her aim must always be to raise desire in her lover/audience by withholding some part of herself from his/their eyes, making her letter itself an act of seduction (62). Thus, both in composition and in content, the work of amatory fiction can be regarded as an exploration of the seduction and resistance to seduction of the female author/reader. While the genre offers female authors a space in which to explore the politics of heterosexual romance, it also encloses them within the revelatory feminine body text. The female author of amatory fiction may attempt to expose the exploitation and consumption of the female body within heterosexual romance, but in doing so she also risks exposing her own "body-text." Ballaster argues that by adapting both the Scudérian heroic romance and the *histoire galante*, Haywood's fiction represents this conflict. Haywood looked to France for such fictional models, Ballaster says, because these texts "repeatedly address the question of women's role in the production and consumption of art [and representation]" (66). In the early eighteenth century, erotic fiction by women dominated the more "didactic love fiction" in circulation. But, by the end of the century, the trend appears to have reversed, making the "virtues of chastity or sentimental marriage" the popular norm (33) - a shift that also characterized Eliza Haywood's career. For Haywood, this shift is less a reaction to an increasingly restricted notion of female sexuality than it is a proactive engagement with the amatory text as vehicle for protofeminist pedagogy.

As Ballaster notes, romance writing “became increasingly associated with female transgression and, in particular, with the female body as grotesque ‘dilation’ and inversion of narrative teleology and linguistic order” (167). Thus, attempting notoriety as an author of amatory fiction “entails the same risks for a woman as entering in to a criminal ‘conversation’ with a man” (169). When considered in this light, *Love in Excess* demonstrates the difficulty of creating effective, and respected, entertainment inherent in the amatory genre. Haywood may, as many have convincingly argued, craft a stimulating representation of gender conflict in the space of heterosexual passion that is both entertaining and edifying, but she always does so in the shadow of seduction, where her own body as author/seductress is suspect. Yet, the politics of romance are as much a part of her work as seduction or passion. It stands to reason that she should continue to innovate new and more effective ways of combining her distinctive protofeminist pedagogy with “seductive” entertainments that increase, rather than threaten, its affect. If, as Ballaster argues, Haywood appears to break from de Scudéry’s formula in *Love in Excess*, I suggest that she returns to this formula in *The Female Spectator*. Her generic experimentation with amatory form, according to Ballaster’s genealogy, also suggests an experimentation with the female body-text, and the act of narrative seduction between author and audience. As I shall argue, *The Female Spectator* itself embodies Haywood’s sophisticated attempt to escape the sexual paradox of the female body/text inherent within the amatory form of *Love in Excess*, while restoring female agency to the politics of romance, by reinstating the excitement of amatory fiction with rational Scudérian femininity.

Decriminalizing the Conversation: Mrs. Spectator and the Pedagogy of Reading

‘I am utterly unambitious of any learning this way, and shall endeavour to retain in memory, more of the misfortunes that attended the passion of Sappho, than the tender, tho’ never so elegant expressions it produced. And if readers of romances took this method, the votaries of Cupid would be fewer, and the dominion of reason more extensive.’¹²

¹² Eliza Haywood, *Love in Excess*, 2nd ed., ed. David Oakleaf (New York: Broadview Press, 2000), 108. Subsequent references are to this edition and will be cited in parentheses by shortened title [*LIE*], where appropriate, and page number.

We may read a Multitude of Authors, without being the better, or even remembering one of them, if we do not read with Attention, and a Desire of being instructed; but, if we are once strongly possessed of that Desire, every Trifle we take up will be of some Advantage to us. (*FS15*, II:3, 92)

One of those “bad books” that Reeve’s Euphrasia so eagerly “pass[es] over in silence,” is undoubtedly *Love in Excess, or The Fatal Inquiry* (1719). And yet, as the juxtaposition of the two quotes above suggests, this “amorous” performance seems as interested in female reform as the “virtuous” production with which Euphrasia enthusiastically overwrites it. Separated by a quarter of a century, the reflections of *Love in Excess* heroine, Melliora,¹³ and of *The Female Spectator* eidolon, Mrs. Spectator, can still be read together as one cohesive reflection of critical reading. Such moments of narrative harmony between *Love and Excess* and *The Female Spectator* (1744-6), are overwhelmingly common throughout Haywood’s periodical. Indeed, Kathy King agrees that both text’s apparent “conservatism offers a valuable context in which to consider one of the deep-structure ways in which the ‘amatory’ and the ‘moral’ Haywood are of a piece.”¹⁴ These correlations indicate that at least for Haywood, the amatory novel was always a marriage between pedagogy and entertainment. In the first quote, Melliora defends herself for reading Ovid’s *Epistles* by claiming that romances are only “preparatives to love” for the careless reader – which she is not. For the critical reader, she argues – as did de Scudéry – they serve as preparatives against seduction. Although Melliora’s own ability to resist passion is continually tested and defeated throughout the text, her experience as a reader informs her response to seduction, and ultimately reforms D’elmont, her would-be seducer. Indeed, Melliora falls in love with D’elmont, not by the suggestion of her reading, but by social expectation: her dying father has placed her under D’elmont’s guardianship – a gesture she initially mistakes for a betrothal. Thus, Melliora’s claim that “these sort of books were [...] preparatives to love, and by their softening influence melted the soul, and made it fit for amorous impressions,” is mere rhetoric, or at best, true only for those readers who fail to reflect upon the text in their hands (*LIE*, 108). *Love in Excess* clings tenuously to a Scudérian heroic notion of civilizing feminine virtue, while indulging the force of the heroine’s human desires in the manner of the *nouvelle* or

¹³ David Oakleaf notes that *melior* is Latin for “better” (*LIE*, 85 n. 3). Thus, the full name of this philosophy-reading conversational adept heroine, Melliora Frankville, literally means: “a better French place.”

¹⁴ Kathryn King, introduction to *The Female Spectator*, in *The Selected Works of Eliza Haywood*, II:2, 10.

historie galante. The balance is a difficult one to maintain. More than twenty years later, Haywood's older, "wiser" eidolon, the Female Spectator, revisits the importance of reader responsibility in the act of textual consumption with equal attention to the balance between reason, virtue, and emotion. But this time, rather than blending amatory genres within themselves, she engages the politics of the amatory text from the inside out.

Thus, as with the quote above, Haywood initiates this engagement through *The Female Spectator's* vested interest in the pedagogy of reading. The process of critical reading itself sets the standard for romance reading – and reading in general – the periodical hopes to model. For Mrs. Spectator, "every Trifle we take up" holds pedagogical potential if regarded "with Attention" and a "Desire of being instructed" (*FS15*, II:3, 92). She philosophizes a relationship between reader and text that implies a pedagogy for reading the world and succeeding within it. If, as she writes, "Curiosity is the first and most natural Passion of the Human Soul," and passion itself can be called "curiosity," then every learning experience begins – and ends – with "passion" and "desire." However, without "Direction and well Management," Mrs. Spectator warns that any curiosity can go wrong, leading to the pursuit of "Vanity and Trifles." In other words, without a teacher to "praise" the right method over the wrong, curiosity is little better than "[prying] into such Things as had better to be forgotten or unknown to us" (*FS15*, II:3, 81). Mrs. Spectator's language in regard to questionable books anticipates Reeves' attitude toward "amorous novels" as books that she "hope[s] are forgotten" (1:121). This contentious interaction between reader and amatory text is the essence of both the narrative continuities and distinctions between Haywood's early amatory fiction and her later periodical.

For, such an incendiary genre as amatory fiction proves impossible to harness in the service of female pedagogy, despite its ability to excite curiosity and deliver that entertainment that Mrs. Spectator claims is so vital for instruction. Like Melliora, even the most qualified reader is too quickly consumed in the fires of seduction. Therefore, not only must *The Female Spectator* teach its readers how to read such incendiary fiction, it must also reinvent the amatory narrative according to a different pattern of seduction. More importantly, the eighteenth-century association between the amatory "authoress" and her text problematizes the narrative credibility of a would-be pedagogue. Eighteenth-century society thus refuses the amatory novel the cultural capital required in order to reach its audience and effect ameliorative change through entertainment; and yet, in no other genre can an author so successfully combine passionate

excitement and female-centered material. It seems that while amatory authors sought to push the boundaries of the feminocentric mold erected with so much success and respectability by authors like Madeleine de Scudéry, they found its limits in eighteenth-century notions of femininity. Examining *The Female Spectator*'s adaptation of the themes and narratives of *Love in Excess* shows that Haywood was keenly aware of precisely which amatory forms signaled the seductive female narrative, and which asserted benign female authority.

By reinvesting her amatory narratives with those points of *bienséance* (decorum) and *vraisemblance* (truth to nature) so successful in establishing de Scudéry's novels as models for female behavior – and preparatives against seduction – Haywood refracts her younger amatory voice into a series of compelling protofeminist arguments. The salon nature of the periodical space thus allows Haywood to pick and choose those aspects of the amatory novel best suited to her vision for improving the physical and intellectual lives of women, without the stigma of the sexualized female body-text. *Historie galante, nouvelle, chronique scandaleuse*, the letter, and the Scudérian heroic romance all make one in the periodical conversation. Indeed, the proto-feminism in *Love in Excess* is enhanced within the hybridity of the periodical salon, since the relative level of control over passion within the text becomes itself a subject of discourse. Numerous instances throughout the run of *The Female Spectator* openly or subtly engage with amatory genres, like novels and plays, allowing Haywood to further refine her audience's interaction with the feminized text of passion. Often seemingly hypocritical in their chastisement of amatory fiction, these moments do not so much contradict the professional practices of their author as they help readers to better receive them. In other words, the socio-political subtext that Haywood may fear readers have missed in her amatory novels is unmistakable in her periodical. As Richetti points out, Haywood narrators seem to chastise novels as a rhetorical way of situating themselves from a position of “skeptical, disinterested empiricism.”¹⁵

I will focus on some of the most evident and exigent moments of conversation, as I will call these intertextual parallels, between *The Female Spectator* and *Love in Excess*, in order to demonstrate the ways in which Haywood's periodical is in revisionist dialogue with her earliest novel. By “revisionist,” however, I do not mean to suggest Haywood's atonement or failure in the novel form; rather, I use revision in the sense of remaking – of re-imagining. My intention is

¹⁵ Richetti, “Histories by Eliza Haywood and Henry Fielding: Imitation and Adaptation,” 246.

not to show that *The Female Spectator* is superior to *Love in Excess* but to show that the strengths of one may be a weakness for the other, and that by experimenting in the periodical form, Haywood moves amatory narratives into a space in which proto-feminism trumps passion. *The Female Spectator* accomplishes this in a number of ways. First, the persona of Mrs. Spectator makes the reading of all fiction, especially romance, a point of discussion, mediating and refining the perspective on reading practices only tacitly expressed in *Love in Excess*. Her role as the periodical salonnière reestablishes the Scudérian *vraisemblance* and *bienséance* necessary for promoting the books of *The Female Spectator* as safe spaces for vicarious reader experience. Second, both Mrs. Spectator and her contributors (whether real or imaginary) recycle the characters and conflicts of *Love in Excess*, while deflecting the narratives' seductive tendencies, in order to emphasize gender politics over passion in more metacognitive ways. Once made a part of Mrs. Spectator and her correspondents' discourse, these recycled moments combine with the psychological realism of *Love in Excess*, making the characters of the periodical even more accessible to empathy. And, as Ballaster argues of *Love in Excess*, these stories become edifying and entertaining alternatives to actual reader experience.

To this end, Haywood makes a point of opening the dialogue between Mrs. Spectator, amatory fiction, and the pedagogy of reading, from the very first book of *The Female Spectator* to the last. In fact, as soon as Mrs. Spectator has introduced the audience to her project and her club, she begins the first essay of the periodical by quoting the opening lines of "a justly celebrated Poet"¹⁶ initially published as puffery for *Love in Excess*: "Of all the Passions giv'n us from Above, / The noblest, softest, and the best is Love" (*FS1*, II:2, 20). This pointed allusion underscores Haywood's strategic revision of her own body/text in *The Female Spectator*. Readers familiar with *Love in Excess* would instantly recognize the allusion, and by extension the implication of both the seductive relationship between amatory fiction and its author, and the revisionist relationship between *The Female Spectator* and the amatory narrative. The poem's title "Verses Wrote in the Blank Leaf of Mrs. Haywood's Novel" itself suggests that the lines are actually a form of reader-response. The poet solidifies this suggestion when he names Haywood as both seductress and author who can depict love in so real a manner that her text is capable of

¹⁶*FS1*, II:2, 446 n. 5. Kathy King points out this connection, explaining that the poem appeared with the novel from at least as early as 1722 onward. Patricia Meyer Spacks, in her selected edition of *The Female Spectator*, leaves the quote unidentified.

creating the emotion itself in her readers: “‘Tis love Eliza’s soft affections fires, / Eliza writes, but love alone inspires.” Significantly, the poet intends to offer Haywood’s novel, *Love in Excess*, to his would-be lover as a substitute for his own lack of creative ability.¹⁷ This moment of conversation signals a connection between Haywood’s periodical and the amatory novel – but it adds an element of personal connection, as well. The author of *The Female Spectator* is anonymous, but the author of *Love in Excess* – the “Great Arbitress of Passion” herself – is known to all. This tacit, but unmistakable, point of connection suggests that Haywood, victim of sexual slander and prejudice at the hands of Alexander Pope, Jonathon Swift, and former lover, Richard Savage, understood all too well how easily a woman’s text, and a woman’s body, could be interchanged.¹⁸ Although critics such as Ballaster and King are right to point out that we cannot interpret Mrs. Spectator as Eliza Haywood herself, I suggest that we can certainly read Mrs. Spectator as a projection of Haywood as salonnière, rather than amatory seductress. As de Scudéry emphasizes of the salonnière, her mastery of conversational rhetoric includes an understanding of how best to present the image of herself to her audience. The author/speaker must, as with the love-letter, play a constant game of revealing and withholding herself from her audience. According to Steven Kale, the salonnière’s perfect balance of decorum and divertissement in conducting herself and her salon amounted to “a time-consuming career” of “professional self-sacrifice” (19-20). Haywood may never have claimed authorship of *The Female Spectator*, but by alluding to *Love in Excess*’s poetic puffery, she nevertheless maintains a part of her own author identity within the periodical. Through this identity, she likewise maintains a constant conversation with her own amatory texts whose influence on her readers she takes quite seriously.

¹⁷ “Verses Wrote in the Blank Leaf of Mrs. Haywood’s Novel,” in the appendixes to *Love in Excess*, 2nd ed. (New York: Broadview Press, 2000), 270.

¹⁸ See Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad, Variorum, With the Prolegomena of Scriblerus* (London: John Wright, 1729), 2.146-58; Jonathon Swift, “Corinna” (1728), *The poems of Jonathon Swift*, ed. Harold Herbert Williams (Oxford: Clarindon Press, 1937); Richard Savage, *The Authors of the Town, a Satire: Inscribed by the author of The Universal Passion* (London: J. Roberts, 1725), 10. Pope equates Haywood’s authorship with mothering “babes of love,” simultaneously alluding to her recent publications, and her two possibly illegitimate children. Swift likely alludes to Haywood as Corinna, who “whores” herself “for life” to Edmund Curll, her bookseller. Savage decries Haywood’s authorship, and her sexual conduct, as all one: “Flushed with success, for stage-renown she pants,/ And melts, and swells, and pens luxurious rants./ [...] strong with lust.”

Book I's essay, inspired by the *Love in Excess* puff poem, pursues the point that amatory works can have disastrous effects on gullible young ladies. "I can by no means approve of such Definitions of [Love] as we generally find in Romance, Novels, and Plays," Mrs. Spectator claims, naming every genre in which her own author has published. However, as she goes on, we see that *Love in Excess*, at least, may not exactly fit her description: "In Most of those Writings, the Authors seem to lay out all their Art in rendering that Character most interesting, which sets at Defiance all the Obligations, by the strict Observance of which Love can alone become a Virtue" (*FS1*, II:2, 20). In other words, "most" of these works make heroes and heroines of questionable characters, "dress'd up in all the Pomp of Words!" but the possibility remains open that *some* novels – Haywood's own, perhaps – may attempt otherwise. Still, Mrs. Spectator declares her suspicion of romantic fictions as "preparatives to love." "But what is yet more preposterous," she complains,

and more evidently shews the ill Effects of writing in this Manner is, that we often see Girls too young, either to be address'd to on the Score of Love, or even to know what is meant by the Passion, affect the Languishment they read of... (*FS1*, II:2, 21)

However, her example of such a "Bib-and-Apron-Heroine," Miss Tendrilla, is clearly depicted as herself ridiculous and ignorant, rather than an innocent victim of fiction. She makes a fool of herself at a private concert by loudly sighing "If music be the food of love, play on!" in hopes of attracting the notice of others. Mrs. Spectator's point is not to condemn the text that inspired the effusion, but to condemn the upbringing of so uncritical a reader as Tendrilla, hoping the girl is removed from her current guardians quickly enough to "give her a more rational way of thinking" than what she has picked-up from their care (*FS1*, II:2, 21).¹⁹ Above all else, *The Female Spectator* seems far more intent upon reframing for her readers how novels such as *Love in Excess* ought to be read.

Throughout the periodical, Mrs. Spectator suggests that books are indeed an acceptable space for experiencing the world, especially for women, but only if read with critical attention and reflection. In Book XV, she writes: "We shall become acquainted with the World before we have any thing to do with it" by reading and by study. The implication is that *The Female*

¹⁹ In *FS5*, II:184-185, Mrs. Spectator energetically approves of Shakespeare, the theater, and even the Restoration Theater. Haywood also writes approvingly of Shakespeare in her *The Dramatic Historiographer; or, The British Theater, Delineated* (1735), later retitled *The Companion to the Theatre* (1756).

Spectator itself provides that safe space in which to practice this relationship with stories, since it at once exposes youthful readers to the excitements of the world, its scandal and its romance, and to the reflections of Mrs. Spectator's experience in all such adventures. She equates this critical reading with the development of a "true fine Taste," that requires a special form of pedagogy in which to grow. "[M]any People [...] degenerate from a religious Education, and put in Practice the Reverse of every thing they have been taught," she says, this is because the right "Precepts" have been "inculcated in a rough and undelicate Manner." Teaching is an "Art" that few possess, according to Mrs. Spectator, and in order to "make the deepest Impression," education must be "disguised under the Shew of Amusements and Recreation." In this way, "the most profitable Parts of Learning may be attained, by such Means as would afford us as much Delight, while in the Study of them, as Honour in the Acquisition" (*FS15*, II:3, 91).

Mrs. Spectator regards fiction as playing an important role in this process, but only with the right kind of guidance to refine one's critical reading. "The Love of Reading," she declares a great virtue, and suggests that women begin cultivating such a passion by choosing a part of history that "affords Examples of such Events as there is a Possibility may happen to herself, or those Persons for whom she has the most tender Concern: - By this her noblest Passions will be awaked," exciting sentimental responses that will ultimately make her "all Generosity and Gentleness" (*FS15*, II:3, 91). Fiction, more than fact, carries the potential for removing prejudice where truth often fails (*FS15*, II:3, 93). But, as Mrs. Spectator later points out, "it requires a great deal of Judgment to know what we should endeavor to retain, and what is better forgotten than remembered, happy is it for those who make a Choice of such Books as lay them under no Necessity of picking the *Wheat* from among the *Tares*" (*FS15*, II:3, 92). In fact, the "Romance" should be regarded with less suspicion than "Fabulous Accounts of *real* Facts," because the romance signals its fictionality in its very title (*FS15*, II:3, 93). Thus, in the same breath, Mrs. Spectator anticipates the kind of attitude later "respectable" readers like Clara Reeve will take towards amatory novels such as *Love in Excess*, while indirectly praising those readers who can safely enjoy the novel without being seduced into ignoring its political subtext.

That the romance is often misinterpreted despite its obvious fiction is particularly vexing to Mrs. Spectator. In Book XIV, a correspondent, Claribella, tells the "true" story of her friend, Aliena, whose name seems to imply her position on the outside of a system. "Excess of Passion," the narrator insists, drove Aliena to shear her hair and disguise herself as a boy to

follow her lover to sea (FS14, II:3,39). But her excessive passion apparently had literary origins. Experienced Haywood fans should hardly be surprised. Her first play, *A Wife to Be Lett* (1723), exploited cross-dressing, as did many of its Restoration predecessors, as a vehicle for romantic female agency. And, one of *Love in Excess*'s tragic heroines, Violetta, does much the same thing in order to be nearer to D'elmont in Part the Third. Violetta (disguised as the page, Fidelio) is successful in her plan to be near D'elmont, but wastes away from unrequited love, and the guilt of having abandoned her family. But in *The Female Spectator*, the young cross-dresser's experience is both more and less troubling than Violetta's. Aliena spends a night with a roomful of rowdy ship boys, only to find her gender discovered by the ship's Lieutenant in the morning. Though she avoids the worst, death or rape, her adventure ends in humiliation and disgrace for her lover ultimately rejects her, and every one else assumes that "more had pass'd between that Gentleman and [Aliena] than they in reality were guilty of" (FS14, II:3, 48). Worse, her foolishness is subjected to all the rational, though empathetic, reflections of Mrs. Spectator. In contrast, Violetta's sentimental deathbed scene consumes three of the final four pages of *Love in Excess*, giving her innocent, though errant, behavior more importance than the "lovely examples of conjugal affection" which conclude the novel (LIE, 266).

Furthermore, Claribella insists that Aliena's inspiration for her cross-dressing adventure came from a play. "She was a great Admirer of an old Play of *Beaumont* and *Fletcher's* call'd *Philaster; Or, Love lies a Bleeding*," she writes, explaining her friend was "charmed" by a female character who takes the same method in persuing her lover, and believed that "it would become her to attest [her Passion] by Actions equally extravagant" (FS14, II:3, 43). Thus by extension, both Haywood's play and her novel could have as easily formed the inspiration for Aliena's mischief. Mrs. Spectator's critical reflection on this story is therefore a metafictional commentary on reader-response. As if especially touched, she writes, "[o]f all the Letters with which the *Female Spectator* has been favour'd, none gave us a greater mixture of pain and pleasure than this [letter]" (FS14, II:3, 52-53). Yet much as Mrs. Spectator takes pains to commiserate with the unfortunate Aliena, she does not excuse the lady's behavior by blaming fiction. "To us it seems plain," continues she of Aliena, "that how much *Wit* soever she may be Mistress of in Conversation, she is altogether incapable of making any solid Reflections" (FS14, II:3, 53). Mrs. Spectator even goes so far as to suggest that "such a Disposition where it happens to be join'd with a weak Judgement, is extremely dangerous [...] it often transports such a one

to Excesses, [where] Virtues may become Vices” (FS14, II:3, 54). Even when she finally chastises “poets” for thoughtlessly “touching the *Passions*” (FS14, II:3, 53), it is clear that the true culprit is the foolish young “Bib-and-Apron-Heroine” who, without a “true fine Taste,” cannot tell which parts of amatory fiction should be modeled and which passed over as “excess.”

From Passion to Pedagogy: Eliza Haywood’s “Amatory” Salon

Thus far I have argued that Haywood’s periodical persona, Mrs. Spectator, makes the importance of fiction, reading, and reflection on the lives of young women a unifying theme throughout *The Female Spectator*. Subtly suggesting that the virtues and the evils of any book exist mainly in the transactional experience between the reader and the text, Mrs. Spectator establishes a need for interpretive conversation that she and her own body of Female Spectators intend to fill.²⁰ To this end, Mrs. Spectator transplants those narratives she deems the most effective and entertaining for the purpose into her periodical. The roll of salonnière allows her to draw narratives from the stigmatized body of the amatory genre into the interpretive space of her salon with relative impunity, because she is already the “Mouth” of a socially conservative female “Body.” Thus, she presents her own narrative conversation as opposite to the amatory narrator-seductress, and therefore free from suspicion. By further embellishing her transplant narratives with the Scudérian romance conventions of *vraisemblance* and *bienséance*, Haywood the author completes the formula necessary for making *The Female Spectator* a safe space for vicarious reader experience. Sanitizing the characters and conflicts of *Love in Excess* of their overtly seductive tendencies, however, only serves to enhance their domestic potency even as it signals social acceptability. Two of the most notable moments of conversation between *The Female Spectator* and *Love in Excess* will serve to demonstrate the ways in which the periodical’s amatory revisionism and narrative hybridity steer narrative focus away from passion and toward the profeminist subtext underpinning both novel and periodical alike.

Briefly, *Love in Excess* is an amatory innovation on the bildungsroman, in which the hero grows to manhood by experiencing the world. But, Haywood’s version is not the typical boy-

²⁰Louise M. Rosenblatt, *Literature as exploration* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1995). Rosenblatt sees the “transactional experience” as the sharing between the text and the reader. The text elicits certain memories and assumptions, while simultaneously shaping them.

come-soldier who ripens into manhood over the dead bodies of his enemies on the field of battle. Libertinistic hero, Count D'elmont, grows to maturity only *after* he returns from battle, at home, and over the dead bodies of women. True to the romance genre, *Love in Excess* transforms the nature of masculinity from masculine posturing and gallantry to feeling and sensibility. As the novel progresses, D'elmont learns to respect the power of love, and the importance of mutual affection, but also to respect and value women. Unfortunately, D'elmont's personal growth into a Man of Feeling takes its toll on female life, resulting in the death of no fewer than four women. The first recycled narrative I will examine appears in Book V of *The Female Spectator*, but originates in Part the First of *Love in Excess*. Both versions present young daughters who foolishly trust male gallantry as an escape from severe patriarchal authority. Once they climb out of the window of their father's house, however, they quickly find themselves powerless to control their own fate. Whereas the young escapee of *Love in Excess* becomes the victim of passion and erotic seduction, however, *The Female Spectator's* heroine becomes the victim of avarice and commodification. The heroine of *Love in Excess* is Amena Sanseverin, D'elmont's first "victim." Her subplot suggests the failure of austere parental restriction to protect young women from ruin, implying that such behavior only breeds ignorance in daughters and an inability to understand their own passion. However, like Amena, Haywood's narrator allows the erotica to overwhelm the pedagogical potential of the narrative. In order to concentrate on cadence of seduction, the narrator downplays the "truth to nature" (*vraisemblance*) of individual motives and social context that makes the periodical's more decorous (*bienséance*) version both less sensational, and more tragic.

In the *Love in Excess* version, Amena's character is described as essentially "innocent" by the narrator, a young girl "little versed in the art of dissimulation, so necessary to her sex," whose sheltered understanding of men makes it impossible for her to correctly interpret either her lover's poetic gallantry, or her father's harsh authority (*LIE*, 46). Never imagining that a declaration of love and an offer of marriage are different animals, Amena meets in private with Count D'elmont on several occasions. When ill-spirited rumors of these "trysts" reach her father, his once indulgent manner changes to one of violent persecution and anger. This unreasonable reaction to behavior, which Amena does not perceive as wrong, forms a stark contrast to D'elmont's romantic professions of slavish devotion. Monsieur Sanseverin's austerity sets off the chain of events that leads to his daughter's ruin; but the novel implies, rather

than states that Monsieur Sanseverin's authoritarian behavior is a major motivator for Amena's rebellion. We learn of it only through Amena's waiting maid, Anarette. "[We] immediately saw him enter, with a countenance so enflamed, as put us both in a mortal apprehension" (*LIE*, 48), she tells D'elmont, explaining how "he grew more enraged" at any attempt Amena made to exonerate herself, assaulting her with "a thousand reproaches," dictating a letter to her lover which he forces her to write, and finally imprisoning her in one of his own bedroom chambers (*LIE*, 49). Although the narrator suggests that Monsieur Sanseverin may later have explained the circumstances in "so true a light" as to convince his daughter to reflect differently on her lover's actions, we are left to assume by what follows that the damage has already been done (*LIE*, 54).

Shocked and hurt by her father's behavior, Amena is still more offended by his lack of trust, "giving credit to an intelligence so injurious to her" (*LIE*, 49). She resists by slipping a letter of her own authorship into the one dictated by her father, in which she utterly subverts his intentions and encourages D'elmont's courtship (*LIE*, 47). Sanseverin's object is to force D'elmont either to marry his daughter or leave her alone. But though a gentleman, Sanseverin is poor and the ambitious D'elmont (also in need of money) regards a marriage to Amena with "disgust." The letter might have had its effect, then, if not for Amena's note, and had Sanseverin not also dismissed his daughter's waiting maid, making it her interest to serve D'elmont's ends rather than his. Anaret promises to assist D'elmont in "obtaining the person of Amena, as well as her heart" (*LIE*, 51). Together, they sneak into the garden where D'elmont easily convinces Amena to climb out of the window and accompany him into the Tuilleries. "[C]onsider my angel," he croons, "how much more hazardous it is for you to hold discourse with me here, than at a farther distance from your father;[...] his jealousy of you may possibly make him more wakeful than ordinary" (*LIE*, 57). Once alone with her lover, passion overcomes Amena and her erotic seduction is prevented only by "fortunate" interruption, and ultimately, discovery. Publically shamed, Amena is sent to a convent, where she chooses the social death of the veil rather than return to witness her lover's marriage to a wealthy aristocrat. Thus, Sanseverin's "severity" repeatedly serves the purpose of seduction. In insisting upon believing the word of strangers over his daughter's own assurance of honor, and treating her flirtation with austerity and restriction, patriarchal authority loses control to passion.

In many ways, however, so does the pedagogical effect of the narrative. More interested in seducing audiences into sympathy with the heroine's own passion than in pedagogy, *Love in*

Excess's narrator diminishes the probability for the very critical reflection that her main heroine, Melliora, claims is so vital to romance readers. "What now could poor Amena do," writes Haywood, "surrounded with so many powers, attacked by such a charming force without, betrayed by tenderness within?" (*LIE*, 58). Though equally invested in eliciting reader sympathy with the heroine, *The Female Spectator*'s Mrs. Spectator makes every narrative effort to reverse that effect. Indeed, Book V's reworking of the escaping daughter story is presented as a warning against restrictive parenting. The periodical's first correspondent, Widow Oldfashion, proposes sending her daughter into remote Cornwall to curb the girl's passion for the amusements of London. In response, Mrs. Spectator begs all parents to exercise caution when exerting authority over their daughters, offering widower Alvario's mismanagement of his daughter Christabella as an example of authority gone wrong. Notably, Mrs. Spectator introduces the parent, Alvario, as if he, rather than his daughter, were the main character of her anecdotal narrative. His point of entry, though quickly abandoned for Christabella, sets the focus upon the interaction between parent and child; it also allows Mrs. Spectator a more omniscient perspective from which to relate the motives. For, where Sanseverin's manner remains obscure, Alvario's is pointedly unveiled. Christabella's own situation receives a similar revision, in that honorable pride replaces ignorant passion as the emotion compelling her actions, and the reader's sympathies.

In this way, what had been a sensational and steamy amatory plot is reinvested with truth to nature and decorum – Scudérian *vraisemblance* and *bienséance*. Like Amena, Christabella's misfortunes begin with jealous whispering about innocent coquetry:

tho' perfectly innocent, even in Thought, of every Thing to which Virtue was repugnant, the Gaiety of her Behaviour rendered her liable to the Censures of some, who take a malicious Pleasure in blasting the Characters of those more amiable than themselves... (*FS5*, II:2, 158)

And, like Msr. Sanseverin, Alvario reacts with violent austerity, but this time, his personal character is also a point of interest to the narrator. Mrs. Spectator tells us disapprovingly that as a former "Man of Gallantry himself" he was "too ready to misinterpret any little Freedoms taken by our Sex as the Effect of an amorous Inclination" (*FS5*, II:2, 158-159). His approach to reproving his daughter is also described omnisciently, rather than through another character, thus making a stronger impression: "In vain Alvario remonstrated, menac'd, forbad her, on pain of forfeiting all Pretension to his Favour, ever to come any more into some Company, or be seen in some Places she had been used to frequent." Finally, "enrag'd," he imprisons her in her

chamber. But, while *Love in Excess* hints that Sanseverin explains his actions to his daughter, Mrs. Spectator tells us that Christabella's father realizes he has "taken a wrong Method," and even that he "repented that he has not made Tryal of more gentle Means," but that his male pride prevents him from showing a compassion for his daughter's feelings that he perceives as a weakness in himself. With this expansion of *vraisemblance*, the underlying theme of parental mismanagement is made more apparent. Christabella's desperation also benefits from an expanded truth to nature. Mrs. Spectator dwells on the helpless frustration the heroine suffers from her father's want of trust. "Christabella started at finding herself accused of Crimes which she never had the least Notion of, and would have dyed rather than been guilty of," she says, going on to explain that she "thought herself more injured by his believing the Aspersion thrown on her, than she cou'd injure him by her Disobedience." Her rebellion, too, is attributed directly to Alvario's harsh authority: "But this Confinement, was so far from humbling the Haughtiness of her Spirit, that on the contrary it rendered her more obstinate." Indeed, Mrs. Spectator claims that such treatment converted Alvario from parent to tyrant in his daughter's mind, making her resistance justifiable from her young perspective (*FS5*, II:2, 159).

The reader is also more likely to credit Mrs. Spectator's claim, since Haywood has excised the emotions of romance and seduction from the text. This attempt at *bienséance* converts Amena's sexual passion into a passion for independence in Christabella – making her ultimate disappointment tragic rather than fortunate. Christabella's act of resistance against patriarchy is also a romantic letter, but in a different way. She writes numerous copies of the same text, in which she "[complains] of the Injustice she receiv'd from an Inhuman Father, who had lock'd her up on purpose to make her pine herself to Death, that the whole of the Estate might descend to his other more favour'd Daughter." These, she tosses out of the window like a "distress'd Damsel," hoping for a "Knight-Errant" to rescue her (*FS5*, II:2, 160). Far from poor, Christabella's fortune is independent of her father, making her a potential commodity, instead of a sexual object.²¹ And as such she is perceived by her would-be rescuer, who plans to "make use of the Opportunity which gave him such fair Hopes of establishing himself in the World" (*FS5*, II:2, 161). Since independence, not passion, is her business, he has no trouble convincing her to

²¹ For a convincing argument addressing this narrative, see Julliett Merritt. "Reforming the Coquet? Eliza Haywood's Vision of a Female Epistemology," in *Fair Philosopher*, 176-192. Merritt examines Haywood's interest in teaching women to reflect upon their own status as commodities.

escape out of her bedroom window and into the lodgings he has secured on her behalf. But his plan, Mrs. Spectator assures us, is to subject Christabella to a “more lasting Confinement” than the one from which she seeks escape: marriage. Just when she imagines that she has achieved authority over herself, this “Gamester” opens her eyes to the danger she is in. Alone, and “in the Power of a Man utterly a Stranger to her,” with no escape, her situation is tragic indeed: “at last, in spite of all the Greatness of her Spirit, [she] burst into a Flood of Tears” (*FS5*, II:2, 161).

Mrs. Spectator might have ended here with Christabella’s rape and a forced marriage, but the convention of *vraisemblance* demands that she construct a tale capable of substituting for her reader’s own experience. Eager for a legal marriage, Christabella’s captor responds to her fear by playing the gallant, declaring “Excess of Love” as his motivator, and playing-off his own high-handedness against Alvario’s in order to convince her that the transformation from daughter to wife is a liberating one. He tells her:

the Authority of a Father might force her back into that Confinement, from which she had, but with the utmost Difficulty, got out of: - Whereas when she was once a Wife, all former Duties and Obligations would be dissolv’d, and she would be only under the Power of a Husband, to whom her Will should ever be Law. (*FS5*, II:2, 161)

Thus, ignorant of either her father’s true motives, or those of her “rescuer,” Christabella elects marriage, only to discover that a husband is the greatest tyrant of all: “A Spirit like hers was not easy to be broke, yet did he accomplish the Task in a very few Months” (*FS5*, II:2, 166). This is a cruel punishment, indeed. Socially dead, and married to God, Amena yet avoids this tyranny of man, and without any hint of romantic passion to distract from the inevitability of disaster, readers cannot avoid reflecting on the situation as one they should study to avoid. But, if they do happen to neglect this message, Mrs. Spectator concludes by reminding them: “it ought to be a Warning to all Parents who wish to see their Children happy” (*FS5*, II:2, 166)

The second moment of narrative conversation between amatory novel and “modest” periodical that I will discuss might be termed a warning to all wives with unfaithful husbands. This recycled narrative appears in “Book XIII” of *The Female Spectator*, but originates in Part the Second of *Love in Excess*. Both narratives maintain the subtext that for a wife, jealousy and rage are ineffective responses against the authority of a husband. In the context of the novel, however, passion and intrigue co-opt the message of the heroine’s tragic fate, distracting from the story’s otherwise penetrating representation of domestic politics. But within the space of Mrs. Spectator’s polite salon, a few slight substitutions in the interest of decorum enhance the

plot's truth to nature, without sacrificing excitement. The heroine of *Love in Excess*'s infidelity plot is Alovisa, the aristocratic lady who D'elmont marries shortly after his attempted seduction of Amena. Her "excess of love" for her husband wars with her own authoritative spirit, particularly when she begins to suspect him of infidelity. As the plot builds to the scene of discovery, the narrator openly discusses the ways in which jealousy and passion problematizes the domestic power structure, suggesting that for women, force is not the way to subvert male authority:

[Alovisa] rightly judged that when people are married, jealousy was not the proper method to revive a decayed passion, and that after possession it must be only tenderness, and constant assiduity to please, that can keep up desire... Man is too arbitrary a creature to bear the least contradiction, where he pretends an absolute authority, and that wife who thinks by ill humour and perpetual taunts, to make him weary of what she would reclaim him from, only renders her self more hateful, and makes that justifiable which before was blameable in him. (*LIE*, 96-97)

Alovisa, however, cannot maintain this posture of submission, nor resist the urge to confront D'elmont with the proof of his infidelity. But her demands for justice only exacerbate the situation because, as Haywood is quick to point out, when a husband "pretends an absolute authority" his pride will make him "[think it best] to keep up his resentments" (*LIE*, 104). Alovisa's reproaches are so "reviling, and had so little regard to good manners, or even decency," the narrator tells us, that they raise his rage instead of his guilt (*LIE*, 133). In fact, her fruitless efforts incite D'elmont to exercise his authority and reveal the domestic politics imbedded within the text. He tells Alovisa:

[...] you have done well, by your impertinent curiosity and imprudence, to [...] remind me that I am that wretched thing a husband! [...] You [...] have taken an effectual method to prove your self a wife! – a very wife! – insolent – jealous – and censorious! – But madam, [...] since you are pleased to assert your privilege, be assured, I too shall take my turn, and will exert the – husband! (*LIE*, 99)

"Exerting the husband" is a popular phrase in Haywood, and may be unique to her. Such rhetoric makes the stereotypical positions of husband and wife during this period all too plain. Once a "wife," a woman is either passive and submissive, or "insolent," "jealous," and "censoriousness." Once a "husband," however, a man may wield his very position as a weapon. Still, Alovisa's desire to discover the identity of D'elmont's lover is so insatiable, that she

bargains with his unscrupulous friend, Baron Desparney, who promises her an opportunity to catch her husband and his mistress en flagrante.

This scene epitomizes the ways in which the sexual curiosity of the reader can form a blind to sexual politics. In this scene, Alovisa clearly demonstrates counterproductive and “unfeminine” behavior throughout, yet the pace of the plot offers little time for reflection, and little interest in remembering the narrator’s earlier cautions. When Alovisa rushes into the room to discover her husband cheating, the reader (who knows that both he and the young lady are that moment in the act) is surly as consumed by a combination of voyeuristic excitement, sympathetic embarrassment, and empathetic outrage as the characters themselves:

...rage, at this sight (prepared and armed for it as she was) took away all power of utterance from her; but she flew to the bed, and began to tear the cloaths [...] in so violent a manner that the Count found the only way to tame her, was to meet force with force; so jumping out, he seized on her, and throwing her into a chair, and holding her down in it, [...said he,] ‘you are mad, and I as such shall use you.’
(*LIE*, 142)

Alovisa loads him with epithets, “‘villain,’ – ‘monster!’ and such like names” (*LIE*, 142) threatening to “tear out [the] bewitching eyes” of the “curst aduress!” while D’elmont entreats her not to expose them to the attention of the household. But this is exactly what she does, screaming “Murder” and declaring that “the barbarous man will kill me!” before fainting dead away (*LIE*, 143). These words foreshadow her fate. Still ignorant of the mistress’s identity, Alovisa’s desperate attempts to penetrate D’elmont’s secret end with her own violent penetration – she “by accident [runs] on her husband’s sword” in the dark (*LIE*, 158). Such a sensational death only further obscures the poli-domestic power structure it is certainly meant to convey since its emotional and symbolic realism necessitates close interpretive reading to be understood.

The Female Spectator, on the other hand, presents the infidelity narrative within a periodical salon space in which jealousy and the politics of gender have been part of an on-going conversation for several months. Book X, in fact, is almost entirely dedicated to a lucubration on jealousy. Mrs. Spectator has no patience for jealousy in either sex, and is quick to dismiss any claim that jealousy stems from “excess of love.” Wife-beating in the name of a husband’s “love,” for example, she says is serious abuse. Mrs. Spectator’s reflections on the topic more fully articulate the brief narrative suggestions inserted into the plot of *Love in Excess*. But, as

with the novel, Mrs. Spectator subtly sides with the female reality, as if teaching her female readers how to understand and subvert men:

...excusable as Jealousy may seem in such a Circumstance, it is to be wish'd, that every wife would endeavor to discourage rather than listen to [gossip of infidelity in their husbands]. I would wish her to do Justice to herself, and consider, that if even it were certain [...] He would, when once the hurry of a fleeting Passion was over, consider the Merits of a Woman of Virtue [who] overlooks [and] forgives [male folly]. (FS10, II:2, 347)

As Mrs. Spectator goes on, the reason for this suffering patience becomes clearer. Unfettered to the home, the husband “finds Pleasure in a comfortable Recess” when he returns to it, or he “flies out again” should the home become a space wherein his bad behavior receives censure. His freedom from the home, and from his wife, undercuts the justice of whatever “Reproaches” she may make, there cannot “be a more lively Picture how little Force Female Arguments can have on a transgressing Husband.” Mrs. Spectator’s reflections on this topic are almost directly recycled from *Love in Excess*. “[H]ow justly soever he may deserve [reproaches],” Mrs. Spectator continues, “[he] *thinks* the Dignity of his Nature affronted” (FS10, II:2, 347 emphasis mine). Justice is presumably on the wife’s side, Mrs. Spectator does not lend credence to “Nature,” or attempt to convince women that men have a natural right to this kind of deference – she specifically uses the word “thinks” rather than “knows.” Therefore, where power and autonomy do not exist in equal measure – such as a marriage – a woman must forgo pride, and resort to alternative methods. To this end, Mrs. Spectator goes on to construct a binary between women who resort to passionate force, and those who choose pragmatic restraint. “[I]t is not by Force our Sex can hope to maintain their Influence over the Men,” she asserts, “and I again repeat it as the most infallible Maxim, that whenever we would truly conquer we must seem to yield” (FS10, II:2, 348). Forceful, passionately jealous women (“Viragos”) she associates with mistresses, courtesans, and prostitutes. A “modest” woman seeks rather to deflect attention from her existence as a physical commodity, and emphasize her value as an intellectual and psychological subject. By refusing to vie for male sexual attention, the woman creates the effective illusion that she, not he, holds power and autonomy.

These are the poli-domestic themes circulating within the conversation of *The Female Spectator* salon when, in Book XIII, Mrs. Spectator introduces the story of *Fillamour* and *Zimene*. The discursive, hybrid nature of the periodical thus contextualizes the amatory narrative

such that its proto-feminist themes are brought forward for reflection, even as readers enjoy the scandal of the story. Their delight is free from amatory associations, however, because Haywood has carefully converted those definitively erotic aspects of the scene into tamer versions of themselves. Embedded within a lucubration against gossip, the story is ironically presented as a juicy piece of news: “The Mischiefs occasion’d by a Tongue delighting in Scandal, are too well known to stand in need of my repeating any Examples; yet I cannot forbear giving my Readers a very recent one, which has something in it more than ordinary particular” (*FS13*, II:3, 11-12). Mrs. Spectator goes on to tell us about Fillamour and Zimene, a couple whose marital bliss is disrupted by busybody Ariana. She excites Zimene with a curiosity to discover the identity of their mutual acquaintance, Sophronia’s, secret lover. Apparently, this lady has been seen meeting an unknown gentleman in a room at a house in town so the two women stakeout the house, take a room, and watch through the keyhole for the mystery man’s approach.

The secret lover turns out to be non-other than Zimene’s husband, Fillamour. The confrontation between the couple is one of the most dramatically amusing scenes in *The Female Spectator* corpus and mirrors Alovisa’s discovery of D’elmont in bed with his lover, with one key revision in the interest of *bienséance*: Rather than depicting the adulterous couple in bed together, Haywood depicts them enjoying dinner in a private bed chamber. The change is subtle, but effectively shifts the anticipation of discovery away from the erotic, and towards amusement and reflection:

[Zimene] no sooner found that Supper was carr’d up, then she follow’d the Person quick enough to prevent the Door being shut; - she flew at Sophronia, attempted to tear her Hair and Head-clothes, and would certainly have treated her pretty severely, had not Fillamour, confounded as he was, stepp’d between with these Words: - “No, Madam [...] whatever may be your Imaginations, or whatever Appearances may seem against me, I cannot suffer you to be guilty of a Rudeness which [...] your cooler Thoughts would condemn.’

He was about to add something more, when she, turning from her Rival, pluck’d off his Wig and threw it into the Fire, - ‘Monster! Villain!’ said she, ‘every thing is justify’d by Injuries like mine.’

She spat at him; - she stamp’d upon the Floor, and behaved in all her Words and Actions like a Woman utterly deprived of Reason...she snatch’d his Sword...and had doubtless committed some Deed of Desperation on one or both of them... (*FS13*, II:3, 14)

The position of the audience during this scene is complex, since on the one hand, readers are cast, after a fashion, as fellow females, enjoying a scandalous scene, yet implicitly sharing in Zimene's hurt, anger, and jealousy. As such, female readers who also share Zimene's plight may experience with her the vicarious release of her anger. But, simultaneously cast as participants in *The Female Spectator's* salon space, through which they share in Mrs. Spectator's reflections, this vicarious experience ultimately serves to redirect the righteous female anger it temporarily releases. Through Mrs. Spectator, readers are reminded to reflect upon the hurtful situation pedagogically, and exchange passion for pragmatism.

Not surprisingly, Mrs. Spectator's philosophy on the subject is identical to that of the narrator in *Love in Excess*. She tells her audience that Zimene ought to have "[born] her Wrongs with that Patience which was necessary to make Fillamour ashamed of what he had done" (FS13, II:3, 14). Fillamour's infidelity is contextualized as a pre-marital escapade from which he cannot extricate himself, despite his love for his wife. Yet, interestingly, Mrs. Spectator also points out that, when pressed, Fillamour "exerted the Husband, and threw the Blame of every thing on Zimene," and that "as a *Man*, much more as a *Husband*, he thought himself above yielding" (FS13, II:3, 15). The marriage is "equally irreconcilable," and Articles of Separation are drawn. The lesson, of course, is that "[s]oftness" is a woman's best "Arms" of "combat" in a patriarchal system (FS13, II:3, 18).

Mrs. Spectator dwells upon this social dynamic most pointedly: the wife must bear her hurt, use softness and guilt, and trade passion for reason because in the case of a cheating husband, neither law nor custom is on her side. Like D'elmont, Fillamour cannot submit to his wife, no matter how wrong he knows he is – as master of the house, this inverts the natural order of domestic politics. A man is only woman's slave during courtship – as Haywood is also keen to point out. In both versions of the infidelity tale, Haywood clearly shows the injustice of claiming that male infidelity is just revenge against a jealous wife. But, cast as "most husbands," Fillamour and D'elmont share the same worldview and their actions stand as a warning to women. Like Alovysa, Zimene only wants an apology and an admission of guilt from her husband, but the power dynamics of marriage deny them to her, and the resulting separation does not work to her benefit. Mrs. Spectator emphasizes the material living conditions to which Zimene is reduced after her separation. Dependent on her uncle for subsistence, and unable to earn more income, her circumstances are socially and materially reduced.

Mrs. Spectator clearly expects women to desire agency and autonomy like anyone else. And so, how to swallow the bitter pill of patience more successfully than Zimene is a theme she revisits with reflections and narratives throughout the periodical. As early as Book V, she writes: “nothing is so much desired by women as to have their own will; but as it is impossible for any one, of what station soever, to enjoy it in every thing, we ought to consider and endure to be barr’d from it, and not hazard the highest wish our souls can form...” (FS5, II:2, 182). In other words, we must be aware of our own social and individual limitations so that we may better determine which battles to fight in order to win the war. With the help of the Female Spectator and her own community of women, we are meant to assume, the readers of *The Female Spectator* move closer to achieving this philosophy through entertainment. An adamant believer in the pedagogical potential of the transactional reading experience, *The Female Spectator* exemplifies Haywood’s lifelong use of stories to educate as well as entertain. The periodical capitalizes on the popular success of the amatory novel form as a means of seducing readers, not necessarily in a better, but in a whole new way. Eliza Haywood was first and foremost a popular writer who understood the importance of pleasing her audience. While *Love in Excess* crafts a pace and excitement clearly intended to infect readers with a passion for romance, *The Female Spectator* constructs a hybrid space where reflection is itself a passion and stories are the delightful means to that end.

Haywood’s periodical thus establishes a positive relationship with her early amatory fiction, solidified by Mrs. Spectator’s perception of reading and learning as passion. Through Mrs. Spectator, Haywood indirectly declares her vision for *The Female Spectator* as an impromptu ‘academy’ for men and women when she describes her love of reading. Her idolon’s language in Book VII is almost ecstatic as she describes the public’s indebtedness to books. They are, she says, “that which distinguishes s from Savages [...] informing the Mind, correcting the Manners, and enlarging the Understanding.” She regards them with religious enthusiasm:

What Clods of Earth should we have been but for Reading? [...] Books are the Channel through which all useful Arts and Sciences are conveyed: - By the Help of Books we [...] travel to the most distant Parts; [...] nay take a View of Heaven itself, [...] By Books we learn to sustain Calamity with Patience, and bear Prosperity with Moderation. – By Books we are enabled to compare past Ages with the present, [...] to improve upon their Virtues, and take Warning by their Errors... (FS7, II:2, 254-255)

To authors, it would seem, civilization owes everything, and they “can never be too much Cherish’d and encourag’d when what they write is calculated for public Utility, whether it be for Instruction or innocent Amusement” (FS7, II:2, 255). Set within the space of a periodical that delivers everything from arts and sciences to travel narratives, spiritual philosophy to romance, for both instruction *and* amusement, Mrs. Spectator’s words in praise of books can be seen as integral to Haywood’s construction of her periodical. Clearly, *The Spectator*’s body/text veritably shouts its own “modest” nature as a source of educations, rather than sexual, curiosity.

If writing, like teaching, is an “Art,” as Mrs. Spectator says, it must also study to please. Mrs. Spectator often chastises herself for forgetting her place as an author when she waxes too philosophic. “I shall add no more for fear of being thought too grave;” she says:

Nothing indeed is more certain, than that if a gay thoughtless Person takes up a Book, which he imagines is composed only for Amusement, and, before he is aware, happens to meet with some favourite Vice of his own, artfully and merrily exposed, he will start at the Resemblance [...] and perhaps be reclaimed by it... (FS13, II:3, 34)

With this in mind, Haywood *The Female Spectator* forms a revisionist conversation with the amatory form in the hopes of reviving its seductive success in the service of protofeminist pedagogy. Reinstating the heroic conventions Scudérian *vraisemblance* and *biensnace*, she detaches the notion of the seductress from her body text and claims the authority and respectability of the salon, while continuing the push for female education and autonomy. Nevertheless, for many, Haywood’s adherence to a categorically feminine system of rhetoric in *The Female Spectator* has been a major factor in disqualifying the periodical from serious consideration as a work of protofeminist literature. For them, when placed beside the likes of women such as Ann Finch, Mary Chudleigh, Mary Wortley Montagu, or Mary Astell, whose poems, letters, and treatises offer plentiful instances of unambiguously feminist sentiment, Eliza Haywood appears woefully complacent. Her rhetoric lacks heat, her resentments buried or equivocal; her concessions to men are too “patronizing and excessively indulgent” for true feminism, her desire for female education nothing more than a legitimation of male superiority.²²

²² Ricardo Miguel-Alfonso, “Social Conservatism, Aesthetic Education, and the Essay Genre in Eliza Haywood’s *Female Spectator*,” from *Fair Philosopher*, 72-81, 75.

It seems that being “agreeable” comes at a price, and audience sensitivity looks too much like “kissing the rod.”

Such assumptions are short sighted. In my next chapter, I conclude my salon reading of Haywood’s periodical by examining its conversational engagement with “England’s first feminist,” Mary Astell.²³ I argue that not only is *The Female Spectator* a decidedly protofeminist work, but that it also advances – and revises – Astell’s critique of sexual politics, and her philosophy for the improvement of women’s lives. For Haywood – a professional author, actress, and playwright – the spatial femininity of the periodical presented an ideal opportunity to represent and revise Astell’s concerns, and curriculum, for women. For if experience had taught her that a woman’s text and a woman’s body were too often read as mutually contaminating, it also taught her that, for a woman, the most persuasive methods were those that eschewed argument altogether.

²³ Bridget Hill, introduction to *The first English feminist: reflections upon marriage and other writings*, by Mary Astell (Aldershot, Hants, England: Gower/Maurice Temple Smith, 1986).

CHAPTER FOUR: “FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THEIR TRUE AND GREATEST INTEREST”: *THE FEMALE SPECTATOR* AND MARY ASTELL

And perhaps the great secret of Writing is the mixing all these [styles] in so just a proportion that every one may tast what he likes without being disgusted by its contrary. And may find at once that by the Solidity of the Reason, the purity and propriety of Expression, and insinuating agreeableness of Address, his Understanding is Enlightened, his Affections subdued and his Will duly regulated. [...]

Now a Modest way of delivering our Sentiments assists us in this, and leaves us at liberty to take either side of the Question as Reason and Riper Considerations shall determine.¹

Jane Donawerth argues that “England’s first feminist,” Mary Astell, shares with Madeleine de Scudéry a construction of women’s rhetoric reliant on the “analogy to conversation.” In *Part II* of *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1697), in which Astell outlines her curriculum for the women of her proposed intellectual monastic retreat, Donawerth sees Astell’s “conception of rhetoric as conversation” as instrumental to her position as a champion for women’s intellectual equality (195). She rightly notices that Astell’s preference for the “private conversation,” in which the audience and speaker are equals, liberates women from the authoritarian dictation inherent in the masculine lecture. Furthermore, she reads Astell’s assurance that “Truth being always amiable, cannot fail of attracting when she’s plac’d in a Right Light” (*SP*II, 190), as an “Augustinian-Platonic faith in the attractiveness of truth” (Donawerth, 197). Indeed, the passage from *Part II* that I have quoted above would appear to outline the “ideal of ‘the agreeable’” Donawerth identifies as a key paradigm in de Scudéry’s rhetorical theory. And yet, the conversational style of composition and pedagogy Astell outlines in *Part II* is not reflected in her own texts. Although Astell insists that “[w]e shou’d therefore be careful that nothing pass from us which upbraids our Neighbours Ignorance, but study to remove’t without appearing to take notice of it,” her own productions are frequently caustic, accusatory, and sarcastic in their treatment of such neighborly ignorance (*SP*II, 192). Moreover, her *Proposal* takes the “masculine” form of a lecture in which the speaker, Astell, inhabits the elevated position of

¹ Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Parts I and II*, Patricia Springborg, ed. (Broadview: 2002). II: 192 and 194. All subsequent references are from this edition and will be cited in parentheses by abbreviated title [*SP*], part, and page number.

Truth from which she degrades her opponents. This is a problematic position, in fact, since her Introduction claims to disregard “vulgar breath” and dismiss those who refuse to listen must be to a large extent mere posturing (*SP*II, 119). The success of Astell’s *Proposal* and other works depends upon their communicative currency amongst English readers. Unfortunately, many of those biting passages which feminist scholars applaud as signs of Astell’s protofeminism, probably contributed to the satirical backlash and eventual failure of her more substantial goals.

The space between Astell’s rhetorical prescription for women’s writing quoted above and Astell’s own texts, I shall argue, is the space in which to envision *The Female Spectator*’s own protofeminism. What Astell proposes for women’s religious pedagogy, Haywood’s *The Female Spectator* refracts within a secular salon space. When read alongside Astell’s *A Serious Proposal, Part I and II* (1696-7), and *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* (1700), *The Female Spectator* (1744-6) becomes a secular reinterpretation of Astell’s pedagogical vision. Whereas Astell would appear to stray from her own advice regarding the arts of persuasion as she outlines her dream of a seminary school for women, Haywood constructs her periodical as the academy itself, a salon space in which an unsuspecting reader seeks amusement, only to find herself “artfully and merrily exposed,” her experiences enriched, and her intellect expanded (*FS*7, II:2, 255). While it is true that Astell’s staunch Anglican and Tory conservatism has created its own share of confusion among feminist scholars, it has not stopped most from applauding her as “England’s first feminist.” Those very passages in her texts that certainly limited her audience in her own time are the darlings of twenty-first century feminist scholars because their angry, sarcastic honesty appeals to our own security as the social and intellectual equals of men. Blinded ourselves by the assumed superiority of direct opposition, we often mistake Astell’s angry, sometimes sardonic and often misandristic, texts as decidedly *more* feminist simply because they are *less* “agreeable” to her contemporary male readers. But, as both Astell and Haywood emphasize, such tactics do not win converts.

In Chapter Three, I proposed that Eliza Haywood’s *The Female Spectator* enacts a revisionist conversation with her early, amatory fiction in which the female body text of amatory seductress transforms into the salonnière. I suggested that such a transformation allows Haywood to circulate a protofeminist pedagogy through her own reconstituted amatory narratives with modesty. This chapter theorizes the extent to which *The Female Spectator* represents that feminist or protofeminist endeavor, not despite its conservatism, but because of

it. Haywood's feminism, especially in *The Female Spectator*, is contentious. That modest suppression of erotic content so successful in achieving what I have dubbed a Scudérian salon space seems to repel straightforward feminist readings, problematizing Haywood for feminist scholars who cannot reconcile the periodical's conservatism with its subversive potential. Kathryn Shevelow, for example, claims that Haywood simply "endorsed the domestic ideal,"² while Lisa Shawn Maurer goes so far as to suggest that in Haywood's periodical "women's prosperity rests upon their ability to internalize...completely an ideology of domesticity in which men reign supreme..." (224). Thus over the last twenty years, critics have often agreed with Patricia Meyer Spacks when she warns against the "lure [of] believing her a protofeminist," suggesting that Haywood merely urges women "to work within the existing system" which she accepts as "part of the natural order."³ Though later scholars like Juliette Merritt and Nicola Graves have taken issue with this pronouncement, they have done so by isolating singular themes, like the figure of the coquet or the revenge story, from the whole and ignoring Haywood's conservatism almost entirely.⁴

However, as Hilda L. Smith, in her article "'Cry up Liberty': The Political Context for Mary Astell's Feminism," convincingly argues of Mary Astell, the conservative values of women like her actually gave rise to their feminist perspective.⁵ Scholars must therefore expand their notion of protofeminism to account for the seeming paradox of liberty and submission so instrumental to the philosophy of such women. In this chapter, I argue that Haywood's particular use of the periodical form as a nexus of conversation constructs an effective persuasive discourse on behalf of male/female intellectual equality, female agency and survival in a patriarchal system – more effective in the long run, perhaps, than less diplomatically conservative attempts by her predecessors. Reading *The Female Spectator* as a conversational extension of Astell's *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, I & II* and *Some Reflections Upon*

² Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and print culture*, 168

³ Patricia Meyer Spacks, introduction to *Selections from The Female Spectator*, by Eliza Haywood (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xix.

⁴ Juliette Merritt, "Reforming the Coquet? Eliza Haywood's Vision of a Female Epistemology," in *Fair Philosopher*, 176-192; Nicola Graves, "'Injury for Injury'; or, 'The Lady's Revenge': Female Vengeance in Eliza Haywood's *Female Spectator*," in *Fair Philosopher*, 157-175.

⁵ Hilda L. Smith, "'Cry up Liberty': The Political Context for Mary Astell's Feminism," ch. 13 in *Mary Astell: Reason, Gender, Faith*, eds. William Kolbrener and Michal Michelson (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007), 193-204.

Marriage, I will show that striking similarities in Haywood's rhetoric and philosophy locate her periodical within a larger conversation about female survival within the contemporary eighteenth-century marriage market. I will also suggest that Astell's often abrasive and monologic form of rhetoric excludes much of her desired audience, while Haywood's conversational rhetoric is carefully structured within a discourse designed to appeal to both those women who cling to the status quo, and to the male population upon which all eighteenth-century women depend. Mrs. Spectator's discourses and correspondence on everything from female nature and education to marriage and courtship align significantly with Astell's treatises. Their points of departure, both philosophical and rhetorical, contribute to the efficacy of *The Female Spectator's* studied attempts to increase her influence by soothing opposition, and persuade men that a liberal attitude toward women will serve male interest in the end. Such strategies are in fact consistent with Scudéry's rhetorical theory, denigrating masculine public speech and promoting feminine conversational dialogue as a more effective means of influencing the public – and private – sphere. Moreover, by inviting the discussion of gender equality and social imbalance into the salon space, Haywood succeeds in detaching the question of female intellectual opportunities from the sexualized female body, while still acknowledging the necessity and value of heterosexual relationships. In pointing her readers toward rational employment and improvement, Astell paradoxically urges her argument in part by insisting that women “value *them* [men] too much” if they desire the “Conquest of some worthless heart,” while at the same time using the promise of a surer conquest to secure their interest in her proposal (*SPI*: 55-56). This seeming contradiction highlights the difficulty Astell faces in proposing an intellectual – and specifically religious – retreat for single women in a society obsessed with the business of marrying them off. Ultimately, it would be the juxtaposition of Astell's rigorous rejection of men and marriage with her passionate rhetoric for the love of God that made her a public target for critics and satirists. Her ironic and often sarcastic tone in *Proposals I and II* and in *Some Reflections upon Marriage* only contributes to the stereotypical sense that the speaker harbors passions regarding men and marriage that defy her attempts to restrain them. Astell's own equivocal body thus becomes a target ripe for seductive suggestion with which her satirists can destabilize her system, while plagiarizing her philosophies. In contrast, the imaginary body of the Female Spectator maintains a diplomatic distance between passion and philosophy by embracing the kind of exemplary narratives that Astell too often

rejects, “mixing all these [styles] in so just a proportion that every one may tast what he likes without being disgusted by its contrary” (*SPII*: 192). Her willingness to accept the possibility of conjugal affection in her narratives, and her eschewal of sexual binaries in rhetoric as well as philosophy, successfully temper the Female Spectator’s real resentment and mistrust of men in general. In true salon fashion, Haywood’s periodical is on one level less openly “radical” (if such a term can be excused) than Astell’s texts in its “agreeable ideal,” but on another level it is also much less conservative in its religious tolerance. The nature of salon rhetoric, however, tends to conflate the conversive for conservative – burying the thread of protofeminist engagement. This chapter unburies that thread.

England’s First Feminist: Mary Astell and the Paradox of “Divine Amorism”

With the work of scholars from Lawrence Stone to Bridget Hill and Patricia Springborg, Mary Astell’s name has become synonymous with feminism’s origin story.⁶ And yet, her texts and philosophies have not come without staunch debate over the true extent of her feminism. Critics like Sharon Achinstein admonishes scholars for claiming Astell in the name of feminism while ignoring the theological foundation of her beliefs. According to Achinstein, Astell’s religious views precluded any notion of what we may call a “feminist autonomy” for women. Indeed, Achinstein declares that Astell’s entire program in writing is to deny the “liberal premise of self-sufficiency or human autonomy,” and shore up submission to church and state.⁷ Mark Goldie claims that, as a Royalist Tory pamphleteer, Astell’s seeming exposure of Whig hypocrisy by illustrating the homology between state and family in *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* in fact echoes early anti-Whiggists who derided contract theory by joking that state and sovereign no more derive power from consent of the people than a husband derives his power by consent of his wife. Thus by implication, Goldie destabilizes Astell’s feminism in her “Lockean” arguments for female equality. Similarly, Hannah Smith denies that Astell’s particular interest in

⁶ Lawrence Stone, *The family, sex and marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977); Bridget Hill, introduction to *The first English feminist: reflections upon marriage and other writings*, by Mary Astell (Aldershot, Hants, England: Gower/Maurice Temple Smith, 1986); Patricia Springborg, *Mary Astell: theorist of freedom from domination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁷ Sharon Achinstein, “Mary Astell, Religion, and Feminism: Texts in Motion,” ch. 2 in *Mary Astell: Reason, Gender, Faith*, 17-29, 23.

women strayed from its era. She sees Astell as part of the movement toward female reform begun by men like Richard Allestree and Adam Littleton, that sought to “enable women to live as devout Anglicans” rather than “liberated intellectuals.”⁸ But, as Joan K. Kinnaird pointed out as early as 1979, scholars of Mary Astell should avoid seeing her as one-dimensionally feminist, or conservative. For Kinnaird, Astell “was a true feminist,” but she was also a true conservative and any study of her work must reconsider contemporary assumptions about the constitution of profeminism, and the conservative contribution to feminist thought. Similarly, in her study of Astell, Katharine M. Rogers declares:

Surely feminism need not be limited to single-minded, systematic campaigning for women’s rights, but should include particular sensitivity to their needs, awareness of their problems, and concern for their situation. These early writers helped their contemporaries to formulate their own wishes and needs, and laid the groundwork for the feminist awareness we take for granted today.⁹

More recently, Hilda Smith expands this notion, by theorizing the relationship between Astell and the context of her day as “a dialectical process” in which her conservative values are “essential to developing her feminist arguments.”¹⁰

This sort of dialectical feminism is essential not only to understanding Mary Astell, but to understanding Eliza Haywood as a part of Astell’s profeminist trajectory – two women whose textual identities were in many ways defined by a “loyalty to [their] sex,” and their commitment to women’s lives. Smith points out that Tory women in general were the most vocal in their objections to the limitations placed upon women because their mistrust of the revolutionary Whigs allowed them to perceive the hypocrisies of Whig doctrines where women and the family were concerned. Positioned outside of the revolutionary movements herself, Smith argues, Astell could critique and attack “the realities of women’s subordination within the family and

⁸ Mark Goldie, “Mary Astell and John Locke,” ch. 5 in *Mary Astell: Reason, Gender, Faith*, 65-86; Hannah Smith, “Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694), and the Anglican Reformation of Manners in Late-Seventeenth-Century England,” ch. 3 in *Mary Astell: Reason, Gender, Faith*, 31-47, 32.

⁹ Joan K. Kinnaird, “Mary Astell and the Conservative Contribution to English Feminism,” *The Journal of British Studies* 19 (Autumn, 1979): 53-75; Katharine M. Rogers, *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 4.

¹⁰ Hilda Smith, “‘Cry up Liberty’: The Political Context for Mary Astell’s Feminism,” ch. 13 in *Mary Astell: Reason, Gender, Faith*, 194. Subsequent references to this article will be cited in parentheses by page number.

their culturally imposed ignorance without offending politically powerful male allies” (202). Smith highlights the fact that women within these revolutionary movements did not espouse “feminist” views, or ever dare to check their counterparts directly in terms of female oppression because to do so would have cast doubt upon their commitment to the cause. The treatment of women in their movements thus solidified Astell’s mistrust of them. She would not push for a cause that excluded women like herself. Smith writes:

While subjection to a monarch’s rule limited one’s standing and individuality, it limited men’s and women’s in equal measure, whereas men – from Levellers to Dissenters – who were expressing for a new form of citizenship during the second half of the seventeenth century constructed an ideology that elevated them, while leaving their sisters behind. (204)

Interestingly, Smith notes that Astell’s political nostalgia for the Royal Martyr, Charles I, insured that, “her core beliefs were consistently tied to the politics of a half century earlier and the perfidy of those who offered falsely democratic and inclusive language while both destroying the monarchy and relegating women to familial dependence, domestic ignorance, and cultural insignificance” (201). Thus while Hannah Smith, in contrast, views Astell as simply part of a reformative backlash against the decadence of the Restoration court of Charles II, Hilda Smith’s notion of dialectical feminism, as I shall call it, reveals the ways in which political conservatism in the seventeenth and eighteenth century could indeed be *the* protofeminist platform for women of the period.

As Tory royalists with a strong belief in classist social hierarchy, despite their middling class origins, both Astell and Haywood share what Hilda Smith considers an important outsiders’ vantage point in relation to Whig philosophy. But, while Haywood’s *The Female Spectator* sustains a strikingly similar critique of gender and society to Astell’s *Serious Proposal* and *Some Reflections*, the periodical managed to avoid the controversial backlash that assailed Astell’s publications. The main difference can be found on the level of rhetoric and the extent to which Haywood’s periodical embodies a “feminine” conversational model more consistent with acceptable notions of the female body text in the period. Furthermore, as a salon, *The Female Spectator* is constructed rather to strategically enlist male attention and aid, rather than openly reject them in favor of a single-sex dynamic. In this way, Haywood’s conversational model also complicates – even masks – her periodical’s deep indebtedness to Astell’s more overtly “powerful” philosophies. Her refusal of masculine forms suggests an important rhetorical

decision to subvert patriarchal systems, rather than engage them openly. Lorraine Code's complex exploration of feminist theory and rhetorical philosophy offers a valuable perspective from which to approach Mary Astell's two most popular productions. Code examines the actual and philosophical implications of sex and gender on cognition, logic, reason, and knowledge. She suggests that:

Throughout the history of western philosophy there is a demonstrable alignment between the ideals of autonomous reason and the ideals of masculinity. That alignment suppresses and even denigrates values and attributes long associated with 'the feminine' at the same time and in the same way as it devalues epistemic dependence in the name of cognitive self-reliance. (117)

Furthermore, Code explains that although "[r]eason may be alike in all men," according to traditional philosophers, "man" did not include women (8). "Women have been judged incapable, for many reasons, of achieving knowledge worthy of the name," she continues, "It is no exaggeration to say that anyone who wanted to *count* as a knower has commonly had to be male" (9). Astell's move into the "masculine" monologic, 'rational' discursive modes thus signals her desire to enact socio-political change. However, within the context of eighteenth-century English culture, where women are rhetorically "without authority"¹¹ – the sex of the knower/author automatically undercuts any notion of "autonomous reason" if that knower is a woman. Astell may argue for stereotypically "feminine" modes of rhetoric, deportment, and pedagogy when proposing her school in *A Serious Proposal, Part II*, but in order to assert her authority, she abandons agreeable ideals of rhetoric for the antagonistic, oppositional ideals associated with masculine ways of knowing. Code explains that, "Reason nonetheless persists as an ideal that incorporates attributes valued as masculine and is defined in terms of them. That incorporation is accomplished by suppressing traits that are devalued because of their associations with 'the feminine'" (118). Code thus notes the problem that feminists have when attempting to "claim a place for women" within reason because they must necessarily be included in a "*masculine* conception" – and there is no "rightful" place for a women there, based on its own ancient definitions (119).

Essentialist claims for a gendered rhetoric, or way of knowing, are therefore only valuable insofar as they represent the cultural beliefs and contexts of the period. Certainly, such

¹¹ Code explains, "Aristotle's assumption that a woman will naturally be ruled by a man connects directly with his contention that a woman's deliberative faculty is 'without authority' " (9).

an understanding helps to explain why, with direct, asexual, and pointedly rational argumentation, Astell's text could spur her critics to re-sexualize her text in satirical representations of her body. Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, and Jonathon Swift, for example, encapsulate Astell's position between marriage and chastity, passion and piety in the satirical caricature of Madonella. *The Tatler*, no. 32 (June 23, 1709), imagines Astell/Madonella as the prioress of a monastic school for women whose proclaimed devotion to God falls by the way when infiltrated by a clever rake and his company. "[W]ithout entering into further particulars," claims the narrator, "there was hardly one of them but was a mother or father that day twelve-month."¹² It would seem that the more passionately and openly Astell asserted the benefits of an asexual female life, applauding what William Kolbrener identifies as the "Divine Amorist," the more illegitimate sexuality was attributed to her by her critics.¹³

I will focus on a few of the more obvious points within Astell's texts in order to suggest the ways in which gendered notions of rhetoric problematize the figure of her narrator. In departing from the conversational formula she herself espouses, Astell embodies an equivocal voice whose vacillations between passion and scorn, opposition and friendship destabilize the author-audience relationship. Careful to criticize forensic modes of debate, which operate through "a Malicious and Litigious Opposition," and glory in "Disputing with our Fellow Travellers;" and, to insist that "we must never oppose Commotion with Commotion, nor be in Passion ourselves if we wou'd reform anothers," Astell yet frequently forgets the agreeable diplomacy she espouses, attacking and insulting the opposition at every turn (*SPII*: 157 and 129). Although it can be argued that her virtual audience is female, the success of her arguments must certainly depend upon appealing to men, in whom the greatest share of the power to enact social change in the period lies. Despite logical attempts to present female intellectual advancement, and the establishment of a seminary for women, in such terms as might appeal to the male audience, Astell's narrative often degenerates into sneering sarcasm and irony. In contrast to her otherwise poised and moderate tone, not to mention her persistent claims to rhetorical sensitivity

¹² Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Tatler*, 4 vols. (London: Rivington, Marshal, & Bye, 1789), no. 32, vol. 1:322. Subsequent references to *The Tatler* are to this edition and are included parenthetically in the text by abbreviated title [*T*], issue number, volume, and page number.

¹³ William Kolbrener, "Astell's 'Design of Friendship' in *Letters and A Serious Proposal, Part I*," ch. 6 in *Mary Astell: Reason, Gender, Faith*, 49-63.

in regard to audience and conversation, such lapses appear as just that: lapses that expose the narrator's intense passion and disappointment. In a *Serious Proposal, Part I*, for instance, she appeals to women by disparaging men as "some worthless heart," or "vain insignificant men" (SPI:18-19). In *Some Reflections Upon Marriage*,¹⁴ Astell's naked rancour against men almost overwhelms the text, and while her arguments reflect the reality, they do so to the exclusion of male sympathy. Nowhere in her text is there a positive, or even a redeemable, image of men.

Instead, Astell's depiction of men and husbands looks surprisingly demonic. She speaks sweepingly of the sex's intentions in the marriage state, implying that men are incapable of marrying disinterestedly by refusing even to consider the possibility. She writes:

But suppose a Man does not Marry for Money, tho' for one that does not, perhaps there are thousands that do; let him Marry for Love, [...] and what does his Marrying for Love amount to? There's no great odds between his Marrying for the Love of Money, or for the Love of Beauty, the Man does not act according to Reason in either Case, but is govern'd by irregular Appetites. (SR, 23)

Here, a man does not exist who marries but to appease "irregular Appetites," and to make matters worse, Astell's men are equally incapable of humane honesty. She warns women:

She must be a Fool with a witness, who can believe a Man, Proud and Vain as he is, will lay his boasted Authority, the Dignity and Prerogative of his Sex, one Moment at her Feet, but in prospect of taking it up again to more advantage; he may call himself her Slave a few days, but it is only in order to make her his all the rest of his Life. (SR, 23)

But, lest readers consider her impolitic, Astell does concede that some men have "good Qualities." However, even this concession comes bated with mistrust. "And if Pride and Self-conceit keep a Man who has some good Qualities," she laments, "and is not so bad as the most of his Neighbors, from growing better, it for certain confirms and hardens the Wicked in his Crimes, it sets him up for a Wit" (SR, 29). Men in general, it would seem from Astell's text, are so steeped with evil that women are left with no safe alternative but to remain single, or retreat to Astell's proposed seminary. Those who are foolish enough to marry wicked men are spared precious little of the narrator's sympathy, except in the general sense of bitter helplessness that pervades the text. After all, "the Woman has in truth no security but the Man's Honour and

¹⁴ Mary Astell, *Some Reflections Upon Marriage*, Ed. John Nutt, (Stationers-Hall, London, 1700). All subsequent references to the text are from this edition and will be cited by shortened title [SR] and page number.

Good-nature, a Security that in this present Age no wise Person would venture much upon” (SR, 36-37). And once in the marriage state, even Astell’s avowed acceptance of a husband’s natural authority is called into question by the dripping irony with which she depicts the wife’s “duty”:

She then who Marrys ought to lay it down for an indisputable Maxim, that her Husband must govern absolutely and intirely, and that she has nothing else to do but to Please and Obey. She must not attempt to divide his Authority, or so much as dispute it, to struggle with her Yoke will only make it gall the more, but must believe him Wise and good and in all respects the best, [...]She who can't do this is in no way fit to be a Wife, she may set up for that peculiar Coronet the ancient Fathers talk'd of, but is not qualify'd to receive the great reward, which attends the eminent exercise of Humility and Self-denial, Patience and Resignation, the Duties that a Wife is call'd to. (SR, 56-57)

A sickening picture, indeed, but Astell goes further, adding outright sarcasm and the veiled threat of marital rebellion to support her argument that women must be given a proper, religious education to bear with such a demeaning lot:

...can it be thought that an ignorant weak Woman shou'd have patience to bear a continual Out-rage and Insolence all the days of her Life? Unless you will suppose her a *very Ass*, but then remember what the *Italians* say, to Quote them once more, since being very Husbands they may be presum'd to have authority in this Case, *an Ass tho's slow if provok'd will kick*. (SR, 59)

By the end of *Some Reflections*, Astell’s depiction of male duplicity has left no room for a medium. Her mocking tone establishes her speaker in direct opposition to the mainstream, without so much as a diplomatic show of the contrary view. Courtship she quickly reduces to a grand “Plot,” composed of a “handsome Set of Disguises and Pretences” that “conceals” the true man, lying (as if a snake) underneath: “And at the same time that he nourishes the Hope of being Lord and Master, appears with all the Modesty and Submission of an humble and unpretending Admirer” (SR, 64).

But, perhaps this anger towards men may be excused as a rhetorical attempt to galvanize women. Indeed, in her own life, Astell shared numerous, prolonged correspondence with men like John Norris, with whom she enjoyed mutual respect – and it must be assumed, mutual esteem and trust, as well.¹⁵ Surely the open rancor of her sentiments on men cannot represent her opinion of all men. Supposing Astell seeks only the audience of fellow females, however, the problem of alienating that audience persists. In *A Serious Proposal, Part I*, Astell certainly

¹⁵ Kolbrener, “Astell’s ‘Design of Friendship’ in *Letters* and *A Serious Proposal, Part I*,” 49-64.

claims that women are her audience; and women are often the addressees of *Part II*, though the introduction indicates the possibility of broader influence. However, those women from whom Astell anticipates rejection or censure seem targeted as enemies in this, more moderate, pair of texts. In her introduction to *Part II*, for example, Astell suggests that to approve of her project yet fail to put it into practice, would prove that women “have not the Vertue and Courage to Act accordingly” (*SPII*:119). Whether it be to dismiss opposing views over the nature of the Creator as “too ridiculous to imagine” (*SPII*:181), or to suggest that women “have nothing to do but to glorify GOD, and to benefit their Neighbours, and she who does not thus improve her Talent, is more vile and despicable than the meanest Creature that attends her” (*SPI*:102), Astell certainly stands to limit the appeal of her argument to women by rejecting contradiction or secularity out of hand. In keeping with the mode of monologic discourse, her speaker closes off all dissent as either pathetic or wicked. Nor does she stop here. Focusing all of her attention solely upon those women who may already perceive themselves as outside of, or denied access to, materialist society, Astell openly insults and degrades those materialistic females from whom she anticipates resistance:

...she who is so top full of her outward excellencies, so careful that every look, every motion, every thing about her shou'd appear in Form, as she employs her Thoughts to a very pitiful use, so is she almost past hopes of recovery, [...] Our directions are thrown away upon such a temper, 'tis to no purpose to harp at an Ass, or to chant forth our Charms in the Ears of a deaf Adder; but I hope there are none so utterly lost in folly and impertinence: if there are, we can only afford them our Pity for our Advice will do no good. (*SPII*:125)

An “Ass” and a “deaf Adder,” rankling images of her female opponents, thus comprise the possible positions women can occupy within the text, should they differ to any considerable degree from Astell’s views. But, as Astell herself warns men in *Some Reflections*, the ass will kick and a deaf adder can still strike with venom. For a female author in the eighteenth century whose physical body is ultimately conflated with her text, such rhetorical antagonism spurs resistance and threatens the integrity of the whole. Neither the message in general, nor even the insults Astell levels towards her opponents, are in and of themselves more severe than what authors like Defoe, Addison, Steele, or Swift would employ. But as a woman, Astell’s incursion into the territory of masculine rhetoric risks attack – not against her text – but against her femininity.

Predictably, Astell's contemporary critics would attribute her masculine rhetoric to a suppressed excess of feminine passion. Whereas supporters, such as Dean Atterbury, would merely lament that Astell had not the "most decent manner of insinuating what she means, but is now and then a little offensive and shocking in her expressions," others, as in *The Tatler*, would attribute her anger against pretty women, and seemingly all men, to repressed sexual passion.¹⁶ For, as Kolbrener states, in *A Serious Proposal, Parts I and II*, Astell's language is certainly that of the "Divine Amorist," in which love is a philosophy of theological devotion and benevolence – in opposition to "desire for the creature," that is, the desire for other human beings.¹⁷ But this language is also the language of amatory fiction, even seduction. For example, urging her female readers to return Christ's love in kind, she says: "No certainly, we cannot have such narrow groveling hearts; *no we are all on Fire*, and only want to know wherein to employ our Activity" (SPII:133). On the other hand, Astell roundly rejects the significance of passion between the sexes, dismissing their influence as "the power of Inordinate Affections," in need of "calmer thought" and reason to direct them according to duty (SPII:135). Indeed, the senses in general, Astell relegates to the dustbin as "but a load and trouble, so far from being useful, that they indeed hurt us, unless they're made to minister to Charity and Contemplation" (SPII:212) But contemplation, it would seem, is passionate sensation itself:

We cannot sure do less than fix our Thoughts for ever on Him, and devote our selves Intirely to Him! All our Passions will be Charm'd, and every Inclination attracted! We shall no more dispute his Will, nor seek exemption from it, but with all Sincerity of Heart, and ardent Desire cry out... (SPII:213)

Elsewhere, in her discussion on love, the relationship between her imagined female audience and God again appears in the language shared by amatory fiction. "...we shall be so taken up with the Contemplation and *Admiration* of his Beauties," she insists, "have so boundless an *Esteem*, such an awful *Veneration* for, and so great a *Contempt* of all things in Comparison of Him; that our *Desires* will be carried out after nothing but GOD and such things as may further our Union with Him" (SPII:219). In parallel to a marriage, the emotions of hope, enjoyment, and even jealousy are incorporated into Astell's depiction.

¹⁶ Letter of Dean Atterbury to Dr. George Smalridge, quoted in Kinnaird, "Mary Astell and the Conservative Contribution to English Feminism," 59.

¹⁷ Qtd in Kolbrener, 51.

This conception of God as a husband or lover, though certainly not unique to Astell, stands out starkly against her dismissal of love and passion between the sexes, and the apparent disgust for men in general in her texts, compelling male critics to reconnect her divine amorism to her female body. *The Tatler* reflects the influence of Astell's text upon mainstream eighteenth-century men in decidedly sexual terms, suggesting that women might be seduced by "intellectual triflers" into mistaking their own desires. In it, an exasperated lover, calling himself Charles Sturdy, writes *The Tatler*'s persona Isaac Bickerstaff to complain that his sweetheart is under the influence of Mary Astell's platonic views: "[T]o a lover who understands metaphors, all this pretty prattle of ideas gives very fine views of pleasure, which only the dear declaimer prevents, by understanding them literally: why should she wish to be a cherubim, when it is flesh and blood that makes her adorable?" Through the voice of this young admirer, *The Tatler* satirizes Astell's spiritual education for women as a misapprehension of religion and intellect by females who take the shadow for the substance: the metaphor for the literal. Mocking the female capacity for learning by characterizing it as affected vocabulary ("She calls her chariot, vehicle; her furbelowed scarf, pinions"), Sturdy laments that this education has made his sweetheart both foolish and misandristic (*T32*, 1:315): "It is my misfortune to be six feet and a half high, two full spans between the shoulders, thirteen inches diameter in the calves; [...] I am not quite six-and-twenty, and my nose is marked truly aquiline. For these reasons, I am in a very particular manner her aversion" (*T32*, I:315). The young lady's disgust of handsome men her lover regards as a shallow act. Confident that if Bickerstaff cannot think up some way to trick her back into an appreciation of her own sexual body, he will "make use of a little force, and put her to the rack and torture, only to convince her, she has really fine limbs" (*T32*, I:316). Bickerstaff's response, however, is even more insulting to Astell's philosophy than Charles Sturdy's proposed force. For the latter case at least credits the young Platonne with some steadfastness of belief, while the former sees her ideas as no more than fleeting "opinion." Assuming that no one can truly avoid "the necessities of life," Bickerstaff suggests that the way to make such a "Platonica" pity a man "imprisoned in so much body, and urged by such violent desires," is to pretend to be a divine amorist oneself (*T32*, 1:322). As evidence, he gives the satirical example of Madonella/Astell who was easily won over to sensuality within the walls of her own "nunnery" by a "famous rake" with the cleverness to dissemble a platonic passion for her "intellectual and divine conversation" (*T32*, 1:320). Significantly, Madonella's own

discourse on desire as “implanted in us for reverend purposes, in preserving the race of men, and giving opportunities for making our chastity more heroic,” is apparently given its proper, sexual, interpretation by the rake who quickly impregnates her (*T32*, 1:321). Thus, Madonella/Astell’s misandristic language is revealed as nothing more than repressed or unfulfilled sexual desire for the very men she claims to abhor. *The Tatler* translates her passionate descriptions of divine love into an elaborate seduction of the flesh. Thus, the philosophical impact of monologic discourse in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Part I and II* and *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* does not come without cost. Mary Astell’s attempts to secure authority and force for her arguments lead her into “masculine” forms of discourse whose very nature as oppositional and driven by rational passion, make them particularly susceptible to attacks that seek to refeminize the body of the author through her text. Such critical backlash may well have suggested to savvy professionals like Haywood the need to adapt “feminine” forms to the profeminist philosophy of Mary Astell, subversively promoting intellectual femininity through more accepted rhetorical channels, and to temper the force with which Astell urges celibacy and homosocial life to women – for such overt renunciation of men and sexuality, spoken from the “borrowed” authority of masculine rhetoric, can have only a limited efficacy in eighteenth-century, patriarchal England. Furthermore, Haywood’s own experience as an amatory novelist made her all too aware that the female body/text was subject to cruel conflation at the hands of a hostile audience, making two rhetorical steps absolutely necessary:¹⁸ courting the opposition, and diluting the relationship between the author’s body and her text.

¹⁸ Haywood understood this fact both personally and politically. Catherine Ingrassia gives an extensive discussion of the circumstances surrounding Haywood’s arrest in 1749 for publishing a Jacobite pamphlet, of which she denied authorship and was subsequently released. See Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 116-72. For a discussion of satirical attacks against Haywood, see my Chapter Three, page 20.

“*Your constant Reader, Cleora*”: Mrs. Spectator & the Revision of Mary Astell

She need not make herself so cheap, as to descend to Court their Applauses; for at the greater distance she keeps, and the more she is above them, the more effectually she secures their esteem and wonder. Be so generous Ladies, as to do nothing unworthy of you; so true to your Interest, as not to lessen your Empire and depreciate your Charms. Let not your Thoughts be wholly busied in observing what respect is paid you, but a part of them at least, in studying to deserve it. (*SPI*:56)

O WHEREFORE then will not Women endeavour to attain those Talents which are sure of commanding Respect! – No Form so faultless, but the enquiring Eyes of wanton and ungenerous Men may find a Blemish in. But she who has the least Pretence to Beauty, has it in her Power, would she but once be prevail’d upon to exert it, to awe the boldest, or most affectedly nice Libertine into Submissions, and force him to confess her worthy of a serious Attachment... (*FS5*, II:2, 172)

Surprisingly, the two quotations above are neither from the same text, the same author, or even the same century, and yet together they read as if a part of the same discourse. Although some fifty years separate the first publication of *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, for The Advancement of their true and greatest Interest* and *The Female Spectator*, it seems clear that little changed regarding the lives and education of women in the interim. Both narrators convey an urgent frustration with the wasted energies of their female audience in the pursuit of male attention. They maintain a deep conviction that intellectual beauty is the key to resisting commodification, and attaining true happiness, and an equal conviction that their readers will doubt their word. A close comparison between Mary Astell’s best known works and Eliza Haywood’s *The Female Spectator* suggests both the periodical’s deep indebtedness to Astell’s texts, as well as its important contribution to the protofeminist trajectory of literature and history. Borrowing heavily from Astell’s representation of the female reality and her vision for female education, *The Female Spectator* reformulates Astell’s philosophical model into an accessible textual commodity for popular consumption that allows for harmonious heterosexual relations, however skeptically the text may reflect upon that harmony. Operating after the rhetorical model of the salon, Haywood’s periodical presents and engages Astell’s protofeminist themes within a socially sanctioned, heterogeneous – and heterosexual – space. Positioned as a discursive salonnière rather than a monologic rhetor, Mrs. Spectator can enact a conversational dialogue in which contentious themes circulate, and still maintain an ambiguous relationship between the

topic, the text, and the female body. Indeed, as an amorphous composition of female bodies (plural), in addition to the many correspondents (male and female), the Female Spectator deflects any attempt to reduce the discourse of the text to any one body – however passionate it may occasionally wax.

This heteroglossic effect similarly distracts the reader from perceiving a systemic project within *The Female Spectator*. However, when divided thematically, the extent to which the periodical parallel's the themes of *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Part II* is surprising. In fact, nearly every major topic of discourse in *The Female Spectator* corresponds with a similar theme in *A Serious Proposal, Parts I or II*. Most notable among these are: disparity between courtship and female subjection in marriage, the mutual relation between female ignorance and error, knowledge and happiness, prejudices of education and custom, good and bad reading practice, curing prejudice, good and bad self-love, female indifference and imagination, the corrosiveness of gossip, the necessity of knowledge for female fortitude, regulating the passions, philosophy and religion in female education. Without exception, each and every Book of *The Female Spectator* treats one, or several, of these topics. But, Haywood's periodical chooses instead to represent protofeminist themes according to the system actually suggested by Astell herself – that of instructing through pleasing conversation. Through essays, correspondents, and narratives, *The Female Spectator* reproduces, revises, and extends the examination of female education, character, marriage, and subjugation begun by Mary Astell.

The most obvious example of this protofeminist conversation appears in Book X of *The Female Spectator*, with a letter from a correspondent styled, “Your constant Reader, And humble Servant, Cleora.” This letter, and the Female Spectator's reflections thereafter, serves as a useful starting-point in a comparative reading between the periodical and Astell's texts. This is because the voice of Cleora is the most direct representation of Astell herself within the periodical, for unlike Mrs. Spectator, who is bound to maintain an agreeable, non-oppositional balance in respect to all *topoi*, correspondents like Cleora are welcome to assert themselves as they please. Cleora's description of the periodical thus suggests the way many female consumers likely perceived it, as “endeavoring to improve the Minds and Manners of our unthinking Sex” – the same project, in short, proposed by Astell. And like Astell herself, Cleora does not scruple to defend women for “the Errors they commit,” by arguing that these are “the Fault of a wrong Education,” and more specifically, the fault of men (*FS*10, II:2, 354): “only the Men, and the

Men of Understanding too, who, in effect, merit the Blame of this, and are answerable for all the Misconduct we are guilty of” (*FS10*, II:2, 354-355). In quick succession, Cleora summarizes Astell’s main points on sexual politics. “*Custom*,” not intelligence, she insists, “has established” men in positions of power over women, and though a “free Country,” England yet “enslaves” its women in ignorance at the risk of their “Immortality.” “There is, undoubtedly, no Sexes in Souls,” she declares, insisting that women are equally capable of practicing virtue, religion, and science as men. Finally, she suggests that men themselves would be the benefactors of female education, as women would “be more obedient Daughters, more faithful Wives, more tender Mothers, more sincere Friends, and more valuable in every other Station of Life.” In itself, Cleora’s letter is short, despite her claim to “have let my Pen run a much greater Length than I at first intended.” But, it introduces the debate over intellectual equality and female education that the Female Spectator has hesitated to broach directly up until this point (*FS10*, II:2, 355).

The previous nine Books of the periodical might be read as deeply engaged with Astell’s philosophy and pedagogy. In order, they address: the dangers of female ignorance in courtship and marriage, female subjugation in marriage and the mercenary duplicity of men, controlling the passions, vices, and temperament through reflection, the importance of solitude and philosophy for women, imagination, fostering good-nature through education, the fallacies of courtship, and reforming/reclaiming men. Yet, through all of these narratives and lucubrations, the open debate between the sexes forms an underlying theme, rather than the object of the discourse itself. Cleora’s letter serves to state the obvious, giving Mrs. Spectator an excuse to respond in kind without introducing the topic openly herself. Thus, the question of women’s educational and intellectual rights assumes a place within the conversation of the periodical *from without*, rather than within, leaving the agenda of the periodical itself free to claim objectivity and balance in the “war between the sexes.”

Positioned as polite respondent rather than orator, or lecturer, the Female Spectator can follow Cleora’s lead as if borrowing word for word from *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*. Mrs. Spectator, however, carefully regulates her tone to appeal to both sexes. For example, Astell sarcasm is unmistakable as she asserts, “I know not how the Men will resent it, to have their enclosure broke down, and Women invited to tast of the Tree of Knowledge they have so long unjustly *monopoliz’d*. But they must excuse me, if I be as partial to me own Sex as they are to theirs” (*SPI*:83). But, Mrs. Spectator in making the same basic statement, neither claims, nor

accuses men of partiality, seeming only to consider the simple facts of the situation. She says, “Those Men are certainly guilty of a great deal of Injustice who think, that all the Learning becoming in a Woman is confined to the Management of her Family” (*FS10*, II:2, 356). *Those* men, replaces Astell’s sweeping *the* Men, and *they*, word choice that forces a male audience into the opposition. Even when answering popular male arguments against the education of women, Mrs. Spectator adapts Astell’s text into a more equitable style. In Astell’s version, the opportunity to insult the learned men of her day with whom she strongly disagreed is too ripe to resist:

If any object against a Learned Education, that it will make Women vain and assuming, and instead of correcting encrease their Pride: I grant that a smattering in Learning may, for it has this effect on Men, none so Dogmatical and so forward to shew their Parts as your little *Pretenders* to Science. (*SPI*: 105)

Mrs. Spectator, however, diplomatically refrains from attack:

The Objection, therefore, that I have heard made by some Men, that Learning would make us too assuming, is weak and unjust itself, because there is nothing would so much cure us of those Vanities we are accused of, as Knowledge. [...] It may happen, indeed, that some might grow overbearing on such Advantages, for there are Tempers too turbulent for any Bounds to restrain; but [...] Knowledge can make the Bad no worse, and would make the Good much better... (*FS10*, II:2, 362)

In similar fashion, Mrs. Spectator addresses the same opposing arguments that Astell refutes, such as the supposed differences between the texture of the male and female brain, or that erudition detracts from the performance of female duties. But in all cases, Mrs. Spectator takes the position of moderator between and for the sexes, by carefully masking any sign of passionate resentment, and frequently considering opposing views as “well-meaning People [who] may be deceived” (*FS10*, II:2, 362).

Not only does Haywood’s presentation of Astell’s arguments for female education strive to appeal to men as much as women, it also appears to encourage a more rigorous engagement with the subject matter of study – a progressive revision. Covering Astell’s points about the benefits of education in making women better mothers, wives, daughters and friends, Mrs. Spectator touches upon and extends Astell’s suggested curriculum, and invites men to contribute to the improvement of her female readers. She deflates the suggestion that women need not pursue liberal studies because they neither “harangue at the Bar,” nor preach at “the Pulpit,” by

pointing out that not all men who study such subjects aspire to these professions either. Then she proposes that ladies could, like others before them, attain “very great Perfection” as philosophers and physicists (*FS10*, II:2, 358). She terms mathematics as “very agreeable and improving,” as well as geography and by implied extension, anthropology. Politics, too, is described in most interesting terms as, “the rise and Fall of Monarchies” and “the various Events which the Struggles for Liberty against arbitrary Power have produc’d, the wonderful Effects which the Heroism of particular Persons has obtained, both to curb Oppression in the Tyrant, and Sedition in the Subject” (*FS10*, II:2, 361). But, this essay only serves to touch-off a series of Books dedicated wholly, or in part, to the promotion of female education. These books go further to promote women’s active study of Natural Philosophy (Natural Science), Astronomy, and foreign languages (particularly French) – not to promote the fashionable vogue, but so that women may read the philosophers of other countries in their original.

Philosophy, Natural Science, and Astronomy, undoubtedly “masculine” fields by the eighteenth century, provide Haywood with an opportunity to enlist the male audience in her project for female advancement. In Book XI, a male correspondent styled Platonides offers an essay on human philosophy in response to “your agreeable Essay [...] wherein you so justly and obligingly exhort your Sex to those Avocations which can alone render them what *they* wish to be, *our Equals*, and what *we* heartily wish them to be, *our Helpmates*.” Embodying what must be the desirable masculine ideal for *The Female Spectator*, Platonides deplores “those lordly or tenacious Tyrants,” who deny education to women, as proof of which he presents a brief philosophy on human existence (*FS11*, II:2, 369). This overture is seconded, in Book XIII, by another male contributor, H.L., who continues the philosophical discussion on “the Nature of the Soul,” touching on the principles of theologians and philosophers such as René Descartes, Samuel Clarke (disciple of Newton), and Andrew Baxter (a contemporary Scottish rationalist). The Female Spectator’s response exercises no inconsiderable philosophical and literary knowledge in itself, touching upon Aristotle and Jean-Baptist Morvan de Bellegarde, as well as Dryden, Shakespeare, and Cowley (*FS13*, II:3, 26-37).¹⁹

Book XV, on the other hand, introduces Philo-Naturae, another male correspondent, who hopes to excite women with a curiosity for exploring and studying Natural Science. The Female

¹⁹ In her notes to Book XIII, Kathryn King provides a detailed account of Haywood’s literary, scientific, and philosophical allusions and references. See *FS13*, II:3, 429-431 nn. 7-20.

Spectator uses his discourse as inspiration to model productive female activity with her own “club,” as well as an extension into Astronomy. Though careful not to encourage women to “fill their Heads with the Propositions of an Aldrovandus, a Malbranche, or a Newton,” lest they “deprive us [men] of their Company for any long Time,” Philo-Naturae nonetheless maintains women’s capacity for such a project should they choose (*FS15*, II:3, 83). He proposes an understanding of the natural world through observation with magnifying glasses and microscopes, suggesting how such an education can make a platform from which to build a more philosophical understanding of human culture as well as animal. As incentive to such an exploration, Philo-Naturae hints that women might become “fair Columbus[es],” discovering yet un-recorded animals and publishing their findings under their own name (*FS15*, I:3, 88-89). Haywood then enacts Phil-Naturae’s suggestion by having the Female Spectator and her “little Society” of female co-editors spend two months exploring the country and reporting their discoveries in the periodical. Book XVII’s resulting discourse on caterpillars and slugs is both detailed and interesting, but it is also significant in its philosophical attention to the connection between the natural world and humanity. Throughout, Mrs. Spectator clearly seeks to model the practice of “thinking in generalities” and of understanding humanity and humility through nature. And, to model female intellectuality within a narrative experience that includes male activity and conversation. In fact, the Female Spectator Society makes great use of their gentlemen neighbors in expanding their educational pursuits during their country adventure. A man of “great Sense and Learning,” offers to “bring [them] acquainted with those Orbs above,” with a fine telescope installed at the “Top of his House.” The occasion allows Mrs. Spectator the opportunity of giving her readers a lesson in the history of astronomical discovery and invention, an overview of the known solar system, as well as a taste of the current debate of the day (*FS17*, II:3, 167). Truly, *The Female Spectator* is an academy unto itself.

It is interesting to note that the adventure to the astronomy tower also becomes an occasion to mention, as if by the way, another particular instance of female intellectual capacity and activity. Throughout the periodical, Mrs. Spectator often makes use of such loose connections as a way of including some fresh instance of female interest or accomplishment without appearing to draw attention to them. Promising to give an example of some innocuous fact ultimately allows the Female Spectator to introduce otherwise contentious material – in this case, an anecdote on the power of piety in braving bad weather serves as an example of women’s

intellectual and professional capacities. Explaining to her readers that she and her companions were compelled to leave off their celestial observations by the onset of a lightning storm, the Female Spectator digresses:

There are Examples, however, even among our Sex, that true Piety and a strong Faith can enable us to throw off all Delicacies and Fears, and venture, in a good Cause, all that the warring Elements have Power to inflict. – There is a certain Lady of Quality, now living in Lancashire, who has spent many Years in the Study of Physic, and whose Prescriptions Heaven has blessed with such Success, that where the Diseases have been judged incurable by the Faculty, the Patient has not only been relieved, but entirely freed from them in a short Space of Time. (FS17, II:3, 174)

“This excellent Lady,” the Female Spectator continues, makes it her business to attend to “any afflicted Person,” whether it be in the middle of a meal, the night, or “Hail, Rain, Thunder, and Lightening.” Liberally praised by Mrs. Spectator, this lady’s story represents what may be the only recorded instance of a female practicing “professional” medicine. Although her activities are given the name of “charity,” her considerable skills are depicted as the result of long medical study. Indeed, responding to her patients just as a local physician might, she cures those patients judged by the “Faculty,” a term for medical practitioners, to be beyond their help. Within this imagined space for female pursuit in the natural sciences, such an example subtly, but certainly, pushes the boundaries of feminism in the texts of the period (FS17, II:3, 174).

Thus *The Female Spectator*’s heterosexual salon space stages Astell’s profeminist pedagogy while engaging the positive attention of a male audience, and modeling ways in which men and women can interact on both a social and intellectual level. Yet the principles of sexual politics therein are neither more conservative, nor less intense in their representation of female subjection as those found in Astell’s *A Serious Proposal* or *Some Reflections*. Haywood achieves this by departing from Astell in two important ways: exchanging divine amorism into a more expansive conception of heterosexual love and human motivation, and substituting compelling narrative illustrations for monologic attacks against male perfidy and marital subjection. These important shifts work to expand the periodical’s readership to a more secular audience, but they also invite serious reflection upon the disturbing realities of female existence.

As I have suggested, by positioning herself as a divine amorist, Astell risks exposing her philosophies as a whole to the sexist reductivism of her critics. They conflate the body of her text with her physical body, and dismiss her religious passion as unfulfilled sexual passion. But

perhaps even more importantly for an author like Haywood, Astell's divine amorism overshadows – perhaps even denies – the impact of heterosexual love on conjugal life, as a motivation to marriage in and of itself, or as a potentially equalizing force in married life. Haywood's acknowledgement of both these possibilities is certainly a philosophical departure from Astell's worldview, and it allows Haywood to address both marriage and religion in her periodical without alienating her audience one way or the other. For Astell, marriage is “only a Business by the Bye. Just as it may be any Man's Business and Duty to keep Hogs” (*SR*, v). Therefore her attitude towards marriage in general omits any consideration of heterosexual love, let alone passion: “Modesty requiring that a Woman should not love before Marriage, but only make choice of one whom she can love hereafter: She who has none but innocent affections, being easily able to fix them where Duty requires” (*SP1*:102). It is certainly such an attitude that Haywood first criticizes in *Love in Excess* (1719), when her narrator exclaims:

These *insipids*, who know nothing of the matter, tell us very gravely that we *ought* to love with moderation and discretion, -- and take care that it is for our interest, -- that we should never place our affections, but where duty leads, or at least, where neither religion, reputation, or law, may be a hindrance to our wishes. Wretches! [...] if [ambition and love] are failings, they are such as plead their own excuse, and can never want forgiveness from a generous heart, provided no indirect courses are taken...²⁰

The Female Spectator takes a more refined stance than this, however, in revising Astell's tenets into a more palatable package. In at least three separate lucubrations, Mrs. Spectator applauds divine contemplation and argues against skepticism and atheism. And, rather than criticize Astell's position openly, the text “agreeably” disagrees with Astell by representing a more mature sense of human experience and motivation, in which religion functions as a guiding principle for behavior rather than its beginning and end. In other words, rather than interpret undesirable actions as indicative of the culprit's irreligion or wickedness, Mrs. Spectator perceives that for good or ill, individuals are more likely to be motivated by physical and emotional needs – especially love. She is therefore more apt to pity the innocence of women who make disastrous decisions for love than accuse them of irreligion. An “unexperienced Heart,” is more often to blame for Mrs. Spectator's characters when they, as with Martesia in Book I, “experienced in *reality* a Flame she had but *imagin'd* herself possess'd of for him who

²⁰ Eliza Haywood. *Love in Excess*, 2nd ed. David Oakleaf, ed. (New York: Broadview Press, 2000), 186.

was now her Husband.” Likewise, Mrs. Spectator holds a lack of proper parenting and education responsible for Martesia’s failure to “combat with an Inclination which seem’d to her fraught only with Delights,” rather than a misappropriation of passion toward “the creature” instead of God (*FS1*, II:2, 24). Thus, by not denying physical passion or heterosexual love, her eidolon avoids the suggestion that she is repressing them in her own body.

Narratives like this one, however, also allow *The Female Spectator* to support Astell’s more assertive denunciations of men and marriage through indirect illustration, rather than direct attack. For though she cannot dismiss either love or marriage as mere “Business by the Bye,” she nevertheless shares Astell’s skepticism and disappointment for both. Through extended narratives or brief anecdotes, the Female Spectator can effectively denounce male behavior without through conversational observation of the “facts,” rather than through direct argument. Since the most contentious elements of Astell’s writing are in her characterization of men and marriage, I will demonstrate this tactic by drawing attention to a few such anecdotal examples, and extended narratives in *The Female Spectator* in which these themes are central.

A reader need go no further than Books I and II of the periodical to perceive the ways in which Haywood replaces Astell’s arguments in *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* with short anecdotes. Astell openly declares that men are the reason that “so few happy Marriages” exist: “it is not to be wonder’d that so few succeed, we should rather be surpriz’d to find so many do, considering how imprudently Men engage, the Motives they act by, and the very strange Conduct they observe throughout” (*SR*, 11). Mrs. Spectator, on the other hand, begins by emphasizing the social ideal of marriage as “the Fountain-Head of all the Comforts we can enjoy,” so as to offset the string of miserable examples of male mismanagement that comprise the rest of the book. And although presented in an entirely different tone and style, each can be paralleled to Astell’s *Reflections*. Dalinda and Macro, for example, represent Haywood’s shared perspective that, as Astell puts it, “She will not find him less a Governor because she was once his Superior, on the contrary the scum of the People are most Tyrannical when they get the Power, and treat their Betters with the greatest Insolence” (*SR*, 36). In the case of Dalinda and Macro, Haywood alters this observation into a first-hand testimony: “[Dalinda] imagin’d, as she has since confess’d, that by marrying one so infinitely beneath her. She would have been sole Mistress of herself and Fortune; [...] But, poor mistaken Woman! Macro no sooner was possess’d of the Power, than he made her see a sad Reverse to all her Expectations” (*FS2*, II:2,

55). Sharing similar rhetorical devices, such as the use of “the Power” to describe the authority of a husband, but presented as experiential knowledge, *The Female Spectator*’s reflections on marriage maintain a conversational relationship with the reader, even as they criticize the institution “which prevents those numberless Irregularities and Confusions, that else overthrow all Order, and destroy Society” (*FS2*, II:2, 61).

Even more emblematic of the marital suffering outlined by Astell are the many extended narratives of *The Female Spectator*. Some of these “true” tales apparently come from female correspondents, but most are related as the first or second-hand experiences of the Female Spectator and her society of women. The most compelling of these appears in Book I, and describes the horrifying tale of Erminia. Innocent and sheltered by her family, Erminia’s perfect feminine virtue brings about her victimization. In *The Female Spectator*, women struggle with more than commodification on the marriage market; Haywood articulates those “irregular Appetites” so ambiguous in Astell and shows that – even more dangerous to women than mercenary husbands – is the fetishization of virgin innocence. *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* touches decisively upon this fact. Noting how detrimental a “little Ignorance” can be to a young lady’s “Honour,” however unfairly she might be tricked into ruin, Astell observes:

A Woman cannot be too watchful, too apprehensive of her danger, nor keep at too great a distance from it, since Man whose Wisdom and Ingenuity is so much Superior to hers! condescends for his Interest sometimes, and sometimes by way of Diversion, to lay Snares for her. For tho' all Men are *Virtuosi*, Philosophers and Politicians, in comparison of the Ignorant and Illiterate Women, yet they don't all pretend to be Saints, be now and then ruin'd for their Entertainment. (*SR*, 61)

And, “tho' she has kept her Innocence,” in being virtuous of intention, “and so is secur'd as to the next World yet,” Astell admits, “she is in a real measure lost to this” (*SR*, 61). This is the paradox of female virtue. English society raises the importance of virtue in young women to such a pitch that only their complete ignorance of men and sexuality can preserve it. Yet, should such ignorance lead them into seduction, or rape, the young victim still bears the shame of “ruin” in the public eye. Erminia’s story dramatizes this paradox with sentimental tropes, compounding its significance for women, men, and marriage more effectively, perhaps, than Astell’s dripping irony on “irregular Appetites” could ever achieve. At her first masquerade, Erminia perceives a strange gentleman wearing the same domino as her brother and, calling him “brother,” innocently asks to be taken home. Taught to depend unquestioningly upon the protection of men

– and little exposed to men beyond her own family – she does not notice that her “brother” has taken her to a strange house until they are inside, and the stranger (a gentleman of quality) un.masks and assaults her. The scene is pointedly disturbing:

The more adverse and shock'd she seem'd at the rude Behavior with which he immediately began to treat her, the more were his Desires inflam'd, and having her in his Power, and in a House where all her Skrieks and Cries were as unavailing, as her Tears and Entreaties, he satiated, by the most barbarous Force, his base Inclinations... (FS1, II:2, 41-42)

Mrs. Spectator's narration makes plain that Erminia's "Innocence was a sufficient Charm," and that this moment – while the most horrifying of her life – is also a highly erotic one for her male attacker (FS1, II:2, 41). Having argued earlier in the book that restricting young women in order to preserve their innocence is a danger to them, this story illustrates that danger. For Mrs. Spectator, young ladies like Erminia live in a world where a man may ruin them without their understanding or consent. Her words to her attacker are thus significant: “she begg'd he would compleat the Villany he had begun, and kill *the Wretch he had made*” (FS1, II:2, 42 my emphasis).

Tragically, her very innocence of sexuality or of sexual predators might actually have spurred her rape. Jean-Jacques Rousseau would later unwittingly encapsulate this dynamic in his *Émile* (1762) thus:

On these occasions the most delightful circumstance a man finds in his victory is, to doubt whether it was the woman's weakness that yielded to his superior strength, or whether her inclinations spoke in his favour: the females are also generally artful enough to leave this matter in doubt.²¹

For men like Rousseau, all indications of female modesty and innocence have the double-function of signifying sexual allurements, even in the matter of dress: “Her dress is extremely modest in appearance, she knows how to affect your imagination. [...] and you will conclude that, every part of her dress, simple as it seems, was only put in its proper order to be taken to pieces by the imagination.”²² In this perception of women, male force is a prerequisite to discovering a woman's desires, because her very being is an act of seduction in which she says

²¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emilius and Sophia: Or, A New System of Education. Translated from the French of Mr. J. J. Rousseau*, trans. William Kenrick, (London: Becket and de Hondt, 1763), 4.5.7-8.

²² Rousseau, 91.

“no” when she means “yes.” When sexual relationships between men and women are always already cast as rape, those very signs that ought to quell male ardor – such as “every thing that is call’d sacred and worthy of Veneration,” “Skrieks and Cries,” “Tears and Entreaties” – actually inflame it (*FS1*, II:2, 41, 42). Worse, the victim herself becomes convinced that she has lost her most valuable asset with her virginity. In other words, her body – which can be co-opted, abused, and devalued by a man – is the most cherished attribute she possesses.

Echoing this state, Erminia’s rapist orders her blindfolded and dropped in “an obscure, dirty Lane, in the *Strand*, near the Water Side.” Thus juxtaposed, both Erminia and the “dirty Lane” are now “obscure, dirty” byways, unable to stop traffic from entering (*FS1*, II:2, 42). Setting her down by the water further reinforces her rapist’s agreement with cultural mores that applaud the rape victim’s suicide. She has begged him to kill her, but apparently it is more gentlemanly to let the lady kill herself. But Erminia’s self-inflicted fate is little better. Although her betrothed declares, “an Act of Force could not be esteem’d any Breach of [her virtue],” Erminia can no longer value herself enough to accept his renewed offer of marriage. Even more disturbing, her family “and even her Lover, in spite of himself, could not forbear applauding” her choice to forsake society for seclusion in the country (*FS1*, II:2, 44). Mrs. Spectator, however, treats *Erminia’s* decision ambiguously, calling her “Notions of Honour and Virtue [...] somewhat superlatively delicate”:

What a loss then to the World to be depriv’d of so amiable an Example, as she would have doubtless prov’d, of conjugal Truth, Tenderness, and a strict Observance of every Duty the Men so much desire to find in her they make a Partner for Life. (*FS1*, II:2, 45)

This is a significant statement. Rhetorically, Mrs. Spectator would seem to be admonishing the lover who, though heartbroken, “applauded” his escape from the raped Erminia, and the family and friends who likewise considered her removal from their society welcome, even “noble.” Declaring that Erminia “would have prov’d” “so amiable an Example” strategically rejects Erminia’s actions after her rape as a good example for young women. Further, emphasizing the phrase, “duty the Men so much desire,” exposes the conflicting values behind Erminia’s choice: virginity, not virtue, is the “Duty the Men so much desire” when they applaud such a fate. *The Female Spectator* thus compounds and complicates Astell’s treatment of female innocence and victimhood, gently reproving Astell’s assumption that the young lady is “lost in this [world]” after such an event. But, Mrs. Spectator’s concluding language (electing to use “desire,” for

example, rather than “seek” or “wish”) reflects the relationship between Erminia’s rape, and the sex men desire with their wives. The commodified eighteenth-century female is most attractive to men by virtue of her “innocence.” Thus the marriage itself re-imagines the virgin’s rape, in which the sexually aware bridegroom legally ravishes his bashfully innocent wife. Her innocence also forms a contrast to his sexual knowledge, securing his superiority in the male-female power dynamic. By so dramatizing Erminia’s ordeal, Haywood makes Astell’s otherwise offensive charge against men’s “irregular Appetites” seem an understatement.

Certainly in agreement with such a critique against male/female sexual dynamics, Mary Astell’s *Some Reflections* overflows with denouncements of male treachery, and the Christian forbearance of their wives. But, her black picture of eighteenth-century men excited such angry responses from those readers that she defended her anonymity as author by declaring: “*Who will care to pull upon themselves an Hornet’s nest?*” (SR, i). *The Female Spectator*, however, dramatizes equal selfishness and treachery in men and equal pain and suffering in women, without pulling down the hornet’s nest. The trials of two women in the periodical, Alithea and Jemima, best exemplify this parallel. Alithea, in Book VI, performs Astell’s pathetic prescription for wifely Christian forbearance in *Some Reflections* perfectly. Astell writes:

If Discretion and Piety prevails upon her Passions she sits down quietly, contented with her lot, seeks no Consolation in the Multitude of Adorers, since he whom only she desir’d to please, because it was her duty to do so, will take no delight in her Wit or Beauty: [...] she makes no appeals to the mis-judging Croud, hardly mentions her Misfortunes to her most intimate Acquaintance, nor lays a load on her Husband to ease her self, but wou’d if it were possible conceal his Crimes, tho’ her Prudence and Vertue give him a thousand Reproaches without her Intention or knowledge... (SR, 44)

Alithea’s story reimagines this character as a young wife whose husband, Dorimon, has begun a prolonged affair with another woman. She faces every proof of her husband’s disregard and infidelity with “the most submissive Patience,” refusing to reproach him, even at the urging of her family. Instead, she seeks to minimize the spread of her husband’s affair rather than complain of it to others. Alithea explains her situation to a friend, who asks:

And will you not upbraid him with his Ingratitude, and expose [his mistress]?
Said she. – *Neither the one, nor the other, answered Alithea coldly; either of these Methods would indeed render me unworthy a Return of his Affection...* (FS6, II:2, 209)

Unlike her husband, who Mrs. Spectator explains is free to roam, Alithea cannot leave without suffering humiliation – and worse, heartbreak, since she cannot take her newborn child away with her. The situation thus speaks for itself, without the necessity of argument. Haywood uses the tale to dramatize Astell's point that, "therefore the readiest way is not to own but overlook them, or rather, as too many do, to repay them with Affronts and Injuries" (SR, 39). This, both Astell and Haywood agree, is the only way to reclaim a husband without treading upon his authority. In the story, Alithea's behavior influences the public perception such that her husband's ears are filled with the reproaches of those impressed by her "Sweetness," insisting that he has "acted so as to oblige her to exert all her Love and Virtue to forgive" (FS6, II:2, 213). Alithea's perfect innocence spins a web of guilt for her husband, especially when she adopts his illegitimate child. Her choice of words is admirably potent when he "accidentally" discovers her with two children rather than one. Calling his attention to the mysterious second baby, she says: "*Oh Dorimon!* Continued she, [...] *is there no Instinct in Nature that can inform you; my Affection for the Father makes his Offspring, of whomsoever born, dear to me?*" The narrator paints the husband's confusion in terms strongly reminiscent of *Some Reflections*:

To have his Fault thus palpably made known to her, whom he most desired should be ignorant [...] to receive the highest Obligations, where he could have expected only Resentment; and to hear the Detection of what he had done discovered to him by the injured Person, in such a manner as if herself, not he, had been the Criminal, so hurried his thoughts, between Remorse, Astonishment, and Shame, as left him not the Power of making the least Reply... (FS6, II:2, 215)

Mrs. Spectator, however, is also careful to echo Astell in her reflections upon Alithea's amazing forbearance. She warns husbands not "to become a *Dorimon* in Expectation of finding an *Alithea* in his Wife" (FS6, II:2, 218). In Astell's words:

Thus the Husband's Vices may become an occasion of the Wife's Vertues, and his Neglect do her a more real Good than his Kindness could. But all injur'd Wives don't behave themselves after this Fashion, nor can their Husbands justly expect it. (SR, 17)

Such a theme resonates even more sentimentally in *The Female Spectator* story of Jemima in Book XXII. Submitted as a "True History" by a frequent correspondent, "The Triumph of Fortitude and Patience over Barbarity and Deceit," is the longest of the periodical's sixty-odd narratives, and the only one to which the Female Spectator dedicates an entire book. Jemima's "history" reflects Astell's profeminist lecture in a number of ways, but mainly, it

heroicizes female suffering at the hands of male villainy, ultimately suggesting the fantasy of utopian female existence without men. The “villain,” Lothario, can be read as a direct condensation of Astell’s conniving man:

What good Conduct does he shew! what Patience exercise! what Subtilty leave untry'd! what Concealment of his Faults! what Parade of his Vertues! what Government of his Passions! How deep is his Policy in laying his Designs at so great a distance, and working them up by such little Accidents! How indefatigable is his Industry, and how constant his Watchfulness, not to slip any Opportunity that may in the least contribute to his Design! What a handsome Set of Disguises and Pretences is he always frunish'd with! How conceal'd does he lie! how little pretend, till he is sure that his Plot will take! And at the same time that he nourishes the Hope of being Lord and Master, appears with all the Modesty and Submission of an humble and unpretending Admirer. (SR, 63-64)

Of course, Astell is describing the tricks men play to secure a wealthy wife. *The Female Spectator*, on the other hand, is far more concerned with the way these same stratagems can be employed to seduce and abandon a woman with no fortune at all. Enflamed by Jemima’s loveliness and innocence, Lothario decides that she is a “Person, whose undoing he thought nothing too much to accomplish,” and the more cautious she is of her virtue, the more inventive his strategy. Ultimately, he concocts a story that convinces her to marry him in secret, exercising considerable skills in deception on every level: “[he,] easily perceiving [...] every Emotion as it rose and fell in her Soul, found his Work was not yet perfectly completed; and that also it required the whole Art he was master of to beguile a Maid” (FS22, II:3, 330). Looks, sighs, and protestations of “the Violence of his Passion,” combined with the threat of discovery by those who – he assures her – are enemies to their public union, successfully persuade Jemima into a private marriage ceremony. But to crown his arsenal of falsehoods, Lothario stages the marriage, supplying his valet as priest and forging a special license, all to gain his point of setting Jemima up as his mistress in town.

If Lothario reflects Astell’s quintessential scheming man, then Jemima surely reflects Astell’s wifely martyr. In *Some Reflections*, Astell’s allusion to the female state of subjection can be read as a model for Jemima’s character:

For she who Marries purely to do Good, to Educate Souls for Heaven, who can be so truly mortify'd as to lay aside her own Will and Desires, to pay such an intire Submission for Life, to one whom she cannot be sure will always deserve it, does certainly perform a more Heroic Action than all the famous Masculine Heroes can boast of, she suffers a continual Martyrdom to bring Glory to GOD and Benefit to

Mankind, which consideration indeed may carry her through all Difficulties, I know not what else can, and engage her to Love him who proves perhaps so much worse than a Brute, as to make this Condition yet more grievous than it needed to be. She has need of a strong Reason, of a truly Christian and well-temper'd Spirit, of all the Assistance the best Education can give her, and ought to have some good assurance of her own Firmness and Vertue, who ventures on such a Trial; and for this Reason 'tis less to be wonder'd at that Women Marry off in hast, for perhaps if they took time to consider and reflect upon it, they seldom wou'd marry. (SR, 89-90)

And, indeed, Jemima's trials are equally, if not more, dramatic. Effectually abandoned alone and pregnant in London, without a penny, or any contact with Lothario, she yet maintains a saintly perspective on her lot. When her landlords evict her, when her maid robs her of Lothario's gifts, when the midwife casts her on the street with her newborn twins, and even when denied shelter as she travels by foot to seek her roving husband, the narrator tells us, "How great was the Consolation which Religion now afforded her!" (FS22, II:3, 339). Her journey brings her "among *Savages* and *Christians*," who each deny her charity, and only "that Almighty Being," at last intervenes and "graciously rewarded the Virtue it had tried" (FS22, II:3, 345). Carrying her babies in her arms, feet bloody from the hard road, Jemima is the picture of martyrdom by the story's climax. But she is also the picture of that woman who, by the grace of her "well-temper'd Spirit," finds it in her heart "to Love him who proves perhaps so much worse than a Brute" (SR, 89). For when she is at last rescued from the elements, it is to find Lothario on his deathbed. He was thrown from his horse while courting another women, and has fallen into a consumption, the result of which is to fill him with last-minute repentance.

The narrative's conclusion is a revealing interpretation, perhaps, of Astell's opinions regarding marriage. In place of the heterosexual couple, "The Triumph of Fortitude" imagines a utopian female community as a rejuvenating alternative to patriarchal marriage. Lothario's dying act is to legitimate his marriage to Jemima and settle a handsome jointure upon her, as well as to amply provide for her two children by him. In the wake of his decease, his mother proves eager to "embrace" Jemima, and richly reward a neighboring gentlewoman who gave her succor. The women become lifelong friends and companions:

It is now sixteen Years since the Decease of Lothario, in which time [Jemima] has rejected every Offer made her on the Score of Marriage, and has continued to live with the old Lady, and paid her all the Respect of a Daughter; and the other treated her in the same Manner as if she had been her own: - An entire Harmony has always subsisted between them... (FS22, II:3, 350)

The kindly lady who assisted Jemima is part of this “Harmony,” as the “two Families are perfectly united” by female friendship. Marriage, it would seem, is neither needed nor desired once both financial security and human companionship are achieved. The narrator explains that, “Our Heroine indeed gave the truest Proof of her Affection, by forming, and preserving in a Resolution never to know a second Bed.” Thus female virtue triumphs, and is rewarded, with the death of the husband and the establishment of a happy and celibate community of women (*FS22*, II:3, 350).

Many such tales portray male “brutishness” to an even greater extent without such a romantic and uplifting resolution. One tale in Book XI, for example, depicts a young woman who is literally sold to her male pursuer by her own grandmother, when her virtue proves too strong to overcome by plain seduction. In fact, throughout the periodical, young women are threatened or betrayed into being mistress or reluctant wives by fathers or mothers for their own social and financial gain. Mrs. Spectator’s belief in love and the possibility of happiness in marriage may appear to temper her strong suspicion of men and marriage, but they can not mask it entirely. So powerful is the Female Spectator’s distrust, that she repeatedly discourages widows from ever marrying again. Book IV tells of “a young Widow of my Acquaintance,” whose hasty remarriage results in disaster: “[Her new husband] had not been married a Month before he loaded her with the most gross Abuse, turned her innocent Babes out of Doors, and affronted all her Friends who came to reason with him” (*FS4*, II:2, 122). Book XVI is even more explicit on this head:

...she who puts it in the Power of a Man to treat her own with Inhumanity, is yet more [to be condemned] [...] I am surprised any Women who has Children, at least such as are unprovided for, and are not entirely out of the Reach of those Injustices it is in the Power of a Step-Father to inflict, can entertain even a Thought of subjecting them in that Manner. [...] Everyone knows a wife is but the second person in the family: - A Husband is the absolute Head of it; - can act in every thing as he pleases... (*FS16*, II:3, 114-115)

Mrs. Spectator’s tone waxes forceful, bordering on heat, and nearing Astell’s own rhetoric. Perhaps this is why Haywood’s narrator takes a moment to step outside of her own “lecture,” to converse with her audience. “I am very well aware,” she says, “that those of my Readers, of both Sexes, who have ventured on [such] a second Marriage [...] will think themselves too severely dealt with.” But, she gently insists, that such a “efficacious” “mirror” as *The Female*

Spectator proposes to be must plead its own excuse for “giving some little Pain,” acknowledging that no one who has acted thus could have done so knowingly (*FS16*, II:3, 115).

As she advises in the rearing of children, so she maintains in the pedagogy of her text: “Balsams not Corrosives,” are the best way to reform misguided behavior (*FS14*, II:3, 57). For *The Female Spectator*, this is the effect of salon rhetoric. For Haywood, direct opposition wins few converts – though it can win you many enemies. Better, therefore, to approach with tact. “[G]reat Revolutions are not to be expected at once,” Mrs. Spectator declares, and grandiose calls for change are often dismissed as utopian tattle:

But all this, I doubt, will be look'd upon as visionary, and my Readers will cry, that my Business, as a *Spectator*, is to report such Things as I see, and am convinced of the Truth of, not present them with Ideas of my own Formation, and which, as the World now is, can never be reduc'd to Practice: -- To which I beg leave to reply, that the Impossibility lies only in the *Will*; - much may be done by a steady Resolution, -- without it, nothing. (X, II:2, 362, 366).

Heteroglossic, heterosexual, and polyvalent, salon rhetoric contributes to the periodical's function as an imaginary salon space – a space that invites agreeable diplomacy and destabilizes dichotomies. Fashioned thus, *The Female Spectator* reintroduces the philosophical and pedagogical project Mary Astell sets forth in *A Serious Proposal, Parts I & II* and in *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* to public attention in a pleasingly subversive package. And yet, the conversational salon model is also a traditionally “feminine” mode – would we not call this taking one step forward and two steps back? I think not. Lorraine Code theorizes this tactic as vital to developing a new social identity for twenty-first century feminists. She explains that autonomy as we conceive it – whether it be as individuals, philosophers, or rhetors – is a fallacy in and of itself. “Autonomy-obsession,” as she calls it, serves no one because autonomy tends to be polarized against dependence, which is incompatible with anyone's lived experience (74). We are all to some extent interdependent. Interestingly, charges against Eliza Haywood's conservatism are often pinned upon the very interdependence she constructs for women, accusing her of reinscribing women within their patriarchal roles. Code reminds us, however, that as disempowered figures in society, Haywood's women had no luxury for imagining themselves autonomous. Instead, Code proposes Annette Baier's “person among persons,” as an alternative model (85). If we take “community and interdependence” for our ‘original position’ as human beings, she suggests, we can better account for those responsibilities that the

autonomous individual can never escape (79). In this way, Haywood's *Female Spectator* can be seen as an embodiment of this second person subjectivity, allowing readers to consider how their own second personhood is shaped and how they may carve agency for themselves within it. Ultimately, Code sees this as the "legacy of feminist consciousness-raising" (87): confirming the second person hypothesis. Compellingly suggestive of the *Female Spectator* and her Society, Code writes:

[As a second person] A knowledge claimant positions herself within a set of discursive possibilities which she may accept, criticize, or challenge; positions herself in relation to other people, to their responses, criticisms, agreements, and contributions. [...] dialogue [within this system] is constructed on a conversational model. (122)

Through this conversational interaction, one becomes "sufficiently self-aware to acknowledge one's capacity to participate in relationships that require trust," developing the capacity to "resist the disempowering effects of authority" by becoming "well enough informed to know where it is reasonable to place" trust (185). Haywood's importance to modern feminism thus lies, in part, in her insistence upon a conversational model for her protofeminist philosophy. This rhetorical decision presumes awareness that individualism – and the autonomous rhetorical stance of the individual – conflates the extent to which women are subjected to the consequences of "contractual" social relationships, without enjoying the benefits of the autonomous individual. Between Mary Astell and Eliza Haywood, therefore, the degree of difference is not in feminist sympathies but in the philosophical and rhetorical significance of their textual bodies.

CONCLUSION: *THE FEMALE SPECTATOR* & THE THREAD OF “MODERN” FEMINIST DISCOURSE

In the Afterward to her 1989 study of women in periodical culture, Kathryn Shevelow offers a modern context through which to see Eliza Haywood’s *The Female Spectator*. Following her final chapter, in which she plots a trajectory of female-centered periodicals as they move from single-persona works such as Haywood’s to narratively decentered collaborations such as the *Lady’s Magazine* (1759-63), Shevelow’s Afterward sees the legacy of productions like *The Female Spectator* in the modern proliferation of for-women-only magazines. She opens her Afterward with several excerpts, emblematic of the magazine genre, like these cover announcements from the August 29, 1987 edition of *Woman’s Weekly*, “Britain’s Best-Selling Women’s Magazine”:

Family Knitting: 3 Delightful Designs.
Recipes with Cheese are sure to please.
Irresistible Blouse Offer from only £14.95!
Collecting Jewelry: Junk or Treasure? (qtd. in Shevelow, 191)

And, these cover announcements from the September 1987 edition of *Women’s World*:

So You want to Go Blonde?
Win! A Beautiful Brand New Citron AX!
It’s No Fun Being Phobic.
Free! Apricot Facial Scrub [sample bottle attached to cover]
Could *Your* Marriage Ever Become a Sham?
Bruce Willis Exclusive! He’s the Latest, Greatest Heart-Throb! (qtd. in Shevelow, 191)

However topically incongruous with Haywood’s periodical these magazines appear to be, it seems to me that two main reasons dictate Shevelow’s assertion that *The Female Spectator* is a part of their genealogy. First, Shevelow’s study traces the birth and growth of the female reading audience, and more specifically, the construction of a gendered reading experience that is both limiting and empowering to women as authors and consumers of print in the eighteenth century. Since her study began with Addison and Steele, she tends to identify reading situations for women that fit the domestic trend these early pioneers of “Fair-Sexing It” – as Swift called pandering to the ladies in print – set forth, and she reads only as much of Haywood’s periodical as is needed to support that trajectory. Second, her interest in the problematic space that is this

female reading experience, as she sees it, in turn limits Shevelow's scope to a trajectory of similarly domestic and stereotypical "women's" periodicals of the twentieth century. Ignoring the body of Haywood's text, Shevelow sees only agreeable domesticity and status quo ideology.

As this dissertation has shown, however, *The Female Spectator* has far less in common with *Women's World* or *Women's Weekly* than Shevelow supposes. A better "mother" for her trajectory might, perhaps, have been *The Gentlewoman's Companion* (1675), later known as *The Accomplish'd Housewife* (1745). *The Gentlewoman's Companion's* table of contents reads much the same as those later examples noted by Shevelow, including many similar topics of import to seventeenth-century Englishwomen:

The duty and qualifications of a Governess to Gentlewoman's Children
Good Instructions for a Young Gentlewoman, from the age of Six to Sixteen
Of the Gait and Gesture
Of Speech and Complements
Rules to be observed in walking with persons of honour [...]
Artichokes Fried
Beef A-la-Mode
Jellies of several Colours, for all Sorts of Souc'd Meats, and to be eaten alone
[...]
Against a stinking Breath [...]
A method of Courtship on fair and honourable terms¹

Although printed as a book rather than as a periodical, this text certainly resonates with the interests of domestic femininity in ways that *The Female Spectator* simple does not. Nevertheless, Haywood's decision to broach the important issues of female life and education from the position of the salonnière – whose situation necessarily places her on both sides of every debate, neither revolutionary, nor docile – locates her periodical at the cusp of both trajectories. Completely satisfying to neither, yet formative for both, *The Female Spectator* holds a place in profeminist history characterized by the struggle to make women's concerns important – or palatable – to the reading audience at large. Indeed, despite Shevelow's adherence to the claim that Haywood wrote specifically *for women*, this was certainly not the case. Mrs. Spectator openly declares that her ambition is to attract as wide a readership as she possibly can, men and women, and is careful to reflect her male readership as equally numerous

¹ Qtd. in Janet Todd, "The Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century: Signs and Sexuality," ch. 1 in *The Sign of Angelica: women, writing, and fiction, 1660-1800*, (Camden Town, London: Virago, 1989), 13.

by printing (or claiming to print) as many male correspondents as female. Her periodical is therefore an example of an early attempt to make women's concerns and women's education a heterosexual discussion – a purpose opposite to that of women-only publications to follow.

In this dissertation, I have argued that *The Female Spectator* creates a textual salon, importing the uniquely intellectual and feminocentric, French social space into an English setting whose cultural mores were quickly moving to enclose women's experiences, whether actual or intellectual. I suggested that in doing so, Haywood sought to claim some of those intellectual and social "liberties" for Englishwomen that she perceived Frenchwomen enjoyed, and to help women recognize and ameliorate their subjection under patriarchy. Encapsulated within the figure of her agreeable salonnière eidolon, Mrs. Spectator, the feminized body of the amatory seductress whose aim is to please, and the sexless body of the protofeminist rhetor whose aim is to convince, merge and soften into a socially acceptable female body whose precepts may be trusted and obeyed. But, although this strategy of agreeable dialogue and amelioration certainly had its function in forming and strengthening feminist consciousness to come, its seemingly equivocal position made it altogether inadequate for effecting immediate change for radical philosophers such as Mary Wollstonecraft. By the end of the eighteenth century, women like Wollstonecraft might have shared many of Mrs. Spectator's beliefs about sex, family, and power, but with the possibility of political revolution so immediately before them, working within the system began to seem like pandering to patriarchy rather than subverting it.² But then, where are the threads of Eliza Haywood's periodical salon's legacy? In what forms might her sense of forwarding a protofeminist consciousness through a textual salon space have survived, and how might we pursue such a trajectory? I conclude my study of Eliza Haywood's *The Female Spectator* by suggesting a revision of that genealogy offered by Shevelov's *Afterward*. Instead of linking *The Female Spectator* to the likes of *Woman's Weekly*, I propose three alternatives that in their own separate ways, and on their own ends of the "feminist" spectrum, nevertheless maintain a sense of salon dialogue in their approach to women's concerns: the nineteenth-century periodical *The Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions* (1866-1910), twenty-first century women's periodicals like *Ms. Magazine* (1971-2010) and *Bitch Magazine*

² Mary Wollstonecraft penned *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* after the French revolutionaries failed to establish the natural equality and rights of women alongside the newly-forged rights of men.

(1996-2010), and twentieth-century “Chick Lit”, such as serial column and novel, *Bridget Jones Diary* (1996).

When proposing a trajectory for Haywood’s periodical legacy, those periodicals whose aims are geared in any way toward suffrage for women are never even considered – yet, why not? Haywood’s domestically conservative, yet rational approach to raising female awareness, and advocating for women as the intellectual equals of men certainly set a standard for women of the nineteenth century who sought property and employment rights, without wishing to upset many of the traditional social structures in place. The editors and contributors of *The Englishwoman’s Review* were just such women. Editor and founder, Jessie Boucherett, contributor and funder of the earlier *Englishwoman’s Journal* (1856-1864), Bessie Rayner Parkes, and later editors Caroline Ashurst Biggs, Antoinette Mackenzie, and Helen Blackburn occupied various positions on the political spectrum between what we consider as conservative and liberal. As a collective, their joint concern for women transcended their differences, but their different perspectives guaranteed that their productions would maintain a balance between radical and traditional. These respectable, often married, gentlewomen saw themselves as working toward the goal of informing women, and making their lives better. But, they also tread a careful middle ground between professionalization for women, and women as good wives and mothers. Similarly, they argued for female political enfranchisement, but only for those who owned property. Their first edition treated topics such as: political debates of the day, articles in other journals, women’s education, women in the medical and legal professions, women’s suffrage and accomplishments, and good books. In their “public opinion” section, they included a number of articles from a variety of periodicals on related topics. Historically, *The Review* became a repository of women’s accomplishments, recording female achievement and encouraging more women to follow suit.³ Yet, despite its overt specialization in women’s work and accomplishments, *The Review* certainly echoes *The Female Spectator*, not only in its coterie of women and its inclusion of supportive men, but in its desire to educate women, to praise their accomplishments, and to expand the boundaries of female experience while maintaining a decorous balance between progressive thinking and the status quo. Certainly, there is room – and reason – for further exploring Haywood’s legacy in such venues.

³ *The Englishwoman’s Review of Social and Industrial Questions*. Bound edition Vol 1., No. 1, Oct 1866. 1980: 1-62.

Similarly ignored when scholars imagine Haywood's periodical legacy are those twenty-first-century magazines overtly defining themselves as "feminist". Again, why should this be? Of the ten cover announcements quoted from *Women's Weekly* and *Women's World*, only one topic had any resonance with *The Female Spectator*: the one concerning marital problems. Why should scholars persist in reading Haywood as consistent with this strain of women's print entertainment, and ignore her potential resonance with publications promoting female empowerment? According to American "feminist" magazine, *Ms.*, since its first launch as a sample in the December 1971 issue of *New York Magazine*, the periodical has "become [a] landmark institution in both women's rights and American journalism" that made "a movement into a magazine." And, although this twentieth- and twenty-first-century magazine certainly pushes the boundary of the "agreeable ideal" – James J. Kilpatrick called it "fingernails screeching across a blackboard" – *Ms.* nevertheless occupies space along the trajectory of periodicals focused on women's sociopolitical concerns. *Ms.* writes of itself that it is "recognized nationally and internationally as the media expert on issues relating to women's status, women's rights, and women's points of view" – the same concerns so foundational to *The Female Spectator*.⁴ Similarly, *Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture*, also an American production founded in January 1996, sees itself as a "forum" in which to view and discuss the concerns brought to light by feminist awareness. Publishing columns, features, interviews, analyses, book and music reviews, etc., *Bitch* seeks to deconstruct female and gender stereotypes, by examining:

...media that have traditionally reflected a narrow vision of what women and girls are and can be, whether it's the dumb blond, the needy wife, the castrating mother, "the I'm-not-a-feminist-but..." woman, or the heartless, man-shunning domestic media mogul (to name but a few). We seek to look at all pop culture through an analytical-yet-witty, sharp-yet-sympathetic lens, as well as to celebrate the feminist culture-makers who are transforming the media with their unique contributions.⁵

Finally, *Bitch* does not see itself as an exclusively female space. The editors point out "feminism isn't all about women—it's about resisting and creating alternatives to systematic oppression."⁶

⁴ "Her Story: 1971 – Present," *Ms. Magazine Online*, (2010), <http://www.msomagazine.com/about.asp>.

⁵ "About the magazine," *Bitch Media*, (2010), <http://bitchmagazine.org/about/faq#magazine>.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Again, these – not Beef-a-la-Mode – are the underlying goals of *The Female Spectator*. Times have changed, and neither *Bitch* nor *Ms.* dance the fine line between decorous entertainment and patriarchal subversion – but, then again, they don't really have to. My point, however, is not to suggest a definitive connection here, but rather to open the possibility of connection between these heretofore unexplored threads.

A “safer” avenue of connection – because more mainstream and less openly feminist, perhaps – is twentieth-century Chick Lit. For this reason, I will close this dissertation with an exploration of Haywood's *The Female Spectator* and the voices of *Bridget Jones Diary*. It's been called the ‘Bridget Zeitgeist,’ a “rampaging monster stomping all over our age.”⁷ Beginning in 1995 as a column in London's *The Independent*, reformulated into two novels, and adapted into two films, Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones Diary* remains the “mother” of what we now call “Chic Lit.” Within the space of Bridget's very public “secret self,” single women of the nineties seemed to find the perfect fun-house glass through which to view themselves, their relationships, their careers, their lives. But as reviewer Louisa Young's defense of Fielding's sequel, *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (1999), illustrates, not all female public reception of the Jones icon has been positive. Like Haywood's Mrs. Spectator, Bridget Jones rides the fence between status quo, and feminist progress. “SOME PEOPLE think it a good thing,” she writes of the second Jones book, “to criticize a novel for what it's not. It's not great literature, for example, [...] - and its heroine is not a good example of how a modern, independent woman should be.” Young's defense is that Jones is simply “funny” – a way for thirty-something women to both relate to, and self-differentiate from, the painful doubts and follies of another thirty-something woman. Jones's character is static, allowing her readers to learn from the mistakes she makes, though *she* never will. “She's for laughing kind of at and kind of with,” Young continues, “She's no role model - she never was. She's a scapegoat.”⁸

Young's point is a good one, since the self-segregating label that is “Chic Lit,” sits ambiguously between an urban, “singleton” feminism, and an affirmation of any number of age-old gender tropes, from the fem-flake to the fem-of-fashion. Indeed, Young's emphatic

⁷ Boyd Tonkin, “Bridget, A Rampaging Monster Stomping All Over Our Age,” *The Independent*, London, (April 2, 2001): 3.

⁸ Louisa Young, “Wednesday Book: It's Business as Usual in Bridget Jones Land,” *The Independent*, London, (November 24, 1999): 5.

insistence that Jones is “no role model” hits the nail on the head. Women have been fighting their way out from under the labels of fashion-fool, flake, and menstrual baggage since the days of Addison and Steele, who warned that a woman would fall victim to the first fashionable man with fringed gloves, if not properly trained against the impulse. And it was against the backdrop of such stereotypes that career author, actress, playwright, and “singleton” Eliza Haywood published *The Female Spectator*. This is the legacy of a feminocentric periodical, whose purpose is to show women to themselves – to walk the line between stereotype and reality, status quo and change, and to offer practical advice for female survival in a patriarchal system where revolution does not yet seem possible.

Bridget Jones Diary, neither in its open-text serial form, nor as a novel, never quite approaches what we might call progressive feminism. And, yet, within its series of often-ridiculous situations, the *Diary* manages to hit reality, expose it, and offer its own survival guide for the twentieth century – if readers are willing to reflect. By focusing on a few key scenes from both *Bridget Jones Diary* the feature column, and *Bridget Jones Diary*, the novel, and by holding these alongside the narrative and commentary of *The Female Spectator*, I show that the often problematic flavor of such female-centered texts owes its play between self-assertion and status quo to the salonière tradition of Haywood, and female authors like her. Neither progressive nor wholly conservation on the subject of gender roles, *The Female Spectator* set the standard for presenting situations from which women can learn how to navigate courtship and marriage, among other things.

It seems profitable to consider *Bridget Jones Diary* as a part of this conversation about female experience past and present – drawing from and responding to the rhetoric of women tackling private life in public print. In the March 12, 1997 *Diary* article, Bridget observes, with humorous clarity that:

Dating has become like impossible riddle or quest for mystery answers, almost like being in 18th-century England with impossible series of etiquette hoops to go through, except that nobody knows where or what everyone else's hoops are supposed to be and is madly trying to second-guess each other's strategies.⁹

⁹ Helen Fielding, “Bridget Jones's Diary; Hurrah, have had v good idea. Shazzer should sit next to him and slide a hand on to his thigh...,” *The Independent*, London, (March 12, 1997): 3.

Bridget is right because in the eighteenth century, reading “each other’s strategies” was difficult enough to spur discussion in a number of periodicals, especially Haywood’s. And yet, how little has changed from the *Female Spectator*’s London! The eighteenth-century stricture, forbidding women to fall in love before the object of their affection proposes – the very social prohibition Haywood deplores in *Love in Excess* – still looms large for Bridget’s modern coterie of London women. In the same installment, Bridget suggests that Shazzer should make a first move on her love interest by placing her hand on his thigh: “To my way of thinking it is all to do with sex,” she explains. Why make all this flirtatious to-do about it, she continues, “when what you really want to do is sleep with him?” Instant debate sparks. Will such a move make Shazzer seem a “slag” to her would-be lover? When consulted on the matter, Simon shifts from calling the move “pleasing,” to deciding that, if the hand remained too long on the thigh, it would be odd – even “scary.” “It should be like a nuance,” he explains, “then you’re free to follow it up.” In other words, the woman’s attempt to make the first move is recast as an innocent, but potentially suggestive, gesture that leaves the man “free” to make the first move, if he chooses. The sexual agency Bridget attempts to claim in this hypothetical situation violates gender roles, and is quickly overturned. The *Jones* courtship experience still echoes with seemingly outmoded social precepts, and women (of course) still agonize over how to choose the right Mr. Right.¹⁰

Thus, *The Female Spectator* can be read as establishing a tradition for expressing the female perspective within patriarchy with which the *Jones* chronicles resonate. That is, *Jones*’ texts resonate with an amalgam of salonnière, salon rhetoric, and twentieth-century female discourse (now permissible modes such as bald humor, sexual frankness, ridicule, etc). *Jones*’ urban “family,” for example, parallels Mrs. Spectator and her coterie. In the voice of Mrs. Spectator, *The Female Spectator* offers the perspective and opinions of an experienced coquette, “the greatest Coquet of them all,” she declares (*FS1*, II:8). What is more, her salon coterie – composed of “several Members of one Body, of which [she] is the Mouth” (*FS1*, II:10) – can be translated into *Jones* terms as a “smug married,” a virtuous young “singleton,” a vivacious “Widow of Quality,” much like Bridget’s own (though un-widowed) mother, and a legion of spies “placed not only in all the Places of Resort in and about this great Metropolis [London],” but at every major resort in England and Europe (*FS1*, II:10). Haywood’s mouth of many women promises the perspective of one who has discovered the “secret Springs” of human

¹⁰ Helen Fielding, “Bridget Jones’s Diary; Hurrah, have had v good idea.”

action, and the possibility of learning for oneself “those imperceptible Degrees by which [Passions] become Masters of the Heart, and attain the Dominion over Reason” (*FS1*, II:8). “Curiosity,” Mrs. Spectator claims, is common to everyone, and that “[Her] business, therefore, was to hit this reigning Humour,” by entertaining it “with other People’s Affairs, [that] should at the same time teach every one to regulate their own” (*FS1*, II:9). This is, in many ways, what Young argues the *Bridget Jones Diary* column (and its subsequent books) achieves, via its similarly salon-like body, representative of female youth and captured in the voice of Bridget: Shazzer, the single pseudo-feminist, Jude, the successful career woman, Magda the “smug married,” and in a nod to the times, Tom, whose homosexuality apparently places him on the “female” side of the battle of the sexes. Even Bridget’s mother, whose embarrassing lack of tact and abundance of sexual vivacity, is reminiscent of the *Female Spectator*’s “Widow of Quality.”

Both Fielding and Haywood address the issues most particular to women – Fielding began the Jones column to attract female readers for *The Independent*. And so, like Haywood, Fielding focuses on women’s concerns – especially romance and marriage. Not surprisingly, the romantic premise of the Jones chronicles has its reflection in *The Female Spectator*. In Book VIII, a young, Bridget-like character, Bellmonte, writes the Female Spectator for advice on choosing a husband between three lovers. The first is a “tall graceful Man, of an Honourable Family” who she greatly “esteems,” and whose only failing is that “he is such a strange Creature that he never once told me that he could not live without me, or swore, that if he could not have me, he could have nobody” (*FS8*, II:291). The second loves her so slavishly that she pities him, and the third is so handsome that she cannot help loving *him* – even though she suspects that he loves himself more than he loves her. If the first and third choices here don’t remind us of Fielding’s Mark Darcy and Daniel Cleaver, between whom Bridget is constantly torn, Mrs. Spectator’s response to this letter certainly details the ultimate outcomes of Bridget’s affairs with both men. When it comes to relationships, both narrators suggest, a woman has to see passion for what it is: just sex.

The same goes for “smug marrieds.” The Bridget Jones format most clearly resonates with *The Female Spectator*’s narratives on marital discord, such as that of Book XIII, the heated spectacle between Fillamour and Zimene, which I argued in chapter three was actually a

recreation of the *Love in Excess* infidelity plot.¹¹ I want to close this discussion by linking that *Female Spectator* scene – in its female fury and its pedagogical claim to teach women to use “softness” rather than force to reform husbands – with its twentieth-century counterpart in Fielding’s novel, *Bridget Jones Diary*. That both authors use this type of confrontation scene between married people to explore marriage, jealousy, and reconciliation, is certainly indicative of what has changed in the 252 years between them and what has not – their narrative distinctions reveal both strategic connections between these texts, and the glaring differences in cultural context. For instance, both authors push for reconciliation, but they do so with important differences, namely Fielding’s female audience - latent gender ideology aside – now has equal legal power in property and marriage.

In *Bridget Jones Diary*, readers definitely enjoy the stimulation of an impassioned, and ridiculous, public display of marital dysfunction – especially if those readers are single. In this scene, “smug married” Magda arrives at “singleton” Bridget’s door after discovering that her husband, Jeremy, is cheating. Like Haywood’s Zimene, Magda is pure “hysterical” passion, with a “v. posh sheep-voice.”¹² Bridget’s diary entry reads:

I rushed downstairs, where Magda was outside the flat in floods of tears fiddling under the steering wheel of Jeremy’s Saab convertible, which was emitting a ‘dowee-dowee-dowee’ of indescribable loudness, all lights flashing, while the baby screamed as if being murdered [...] [Magda] yelled into the portable phone. ‘Jerrers, you fucking adulterous bastard! How do you open the hood on the Saab!’ [...] ‘I’m not bloody coming back, you bastard! [...]’ By this time an angry mob was gathering. Next thing, Jeremy roared up on his Harley-Davidson. But instead of turning off the alarm, he started trying to grab the baby out of the backseat with Magda screaming at him. [...] we rushed to the window just in time to see the Saab roar off, with the Harley-Davidson in hot pursuit.¹³

Clearly, Magda has no intention of using her secret weapon, “Softness.” Here, in place of Zimene’s physical attack, Magda lacerates her cheating husband with language alone, and asserts her right, not only to leave him, but to take their child, and his car, with her. The presence of the baby further heightens both the absurdity and the seriousness of the scene. While Zimene manages to stir the household in Haywood’s narrative, Magda has the entire neighborhood out in force. The domestic has become the public, and the woman is the active force – Jeremy’s

¹¹ See my chapter three, pages 96-97.

¹² Helen Fielding, *Bridget Jones's diary: a novel*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 94.

¹³ *Ibid.*

attempts at positive action (reclaiming the baby, coaxing his wife to return home, etc.) are ineffectual.

Both Bridget and the reader laugh at this impossible scene, but the key difference between Fielding's use of the infidelity narrative with its climactic spectacle, and Haywood's, is the way the marriage resolves. Like Fillamour, Jeremy regrets his affair, loves his wife, and would rather make good – but this is where the two depart. The passionate response of the woman to betrayal remains the same, but the man's response to her anger has changed. Far from reacting to Magda's public display with pride and resentment, Jeremy becomes supplicant. The couple is able to discuss the affair, and their feelings, because Jeremy acknowledges Magda's *right* to a passionate, and irrational response – *her* right to “exert the Husband” and demand recognition as a wronged party. He submits to her just anger, forgives (if you like) her ridiculous reaction as understandable (i.e. NOT inappropriate), and the marriage is saved. As we may recall, this social dynamic is Mrs. Spectator's particular concern: the wife must bear her hurt, use softness and guilt, and trade passion for reason, because in the case of a cheating husband, neither law nor custom is on her side. As husband and thus legal master of both the family property and of his wife, Fillamour cannot submit to his subordinate spouse, especially when he knows himself to be wrong because such a lapse in moral judgment calls his right to dominance into question. Without this eighteenth-century social construct, Fielding can re-imagine marital conflict in a way that both laughs at, and sanctions, a woman's passionate anger.

True, her style of feminism is not so clear as professional or academic feminists might wish. True, it grates that Bridget Jones' character is the brainchild of a man, Charles Leadbeater, who “gave birth” to a female “emotional mess” because he felt this would resonate with young Englishwomen readers.¹⁴ But, even this paradoxical situation reflects – in my view – the kind of dynamic that even the popular characters of today must navigate. No matter where we want to be as women in society, we still must work within our context. For Fielding, that means composing the Jones character by casting her readers as Female Spectators, looking-in on the adventures of a woman with whom they can relate to just enough to reflect on the ways in which they do not resemble her. Perhaps our relationship with Haywood's Female Spectator is much the same.

¹⁴ Charles Leadbeater, “I Needed A Woman Who was an Emotional Mess. So I Gave Birth to Bridget,” *The Independent*, London, (April 5, 2001): 3.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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Emily Joan Dowd was born on June 7, 1978 in Stuart, Florida to Gary Edward Dowd and Rebecca Joan Haen Dowd. She spent her childhood running the pine swamps of Palm City with her brother, Andrew, and reenacting the epic battles of literature and fantasy with a close group of neighborhood friends. She has pursued studies in literature and writing since graduating high school, and passed over a scholarship in art to become an English major in college. In 1998, she graduated from Indian River Community College (now Indian River State College) in Fort Pierce, Florida, and in 2000, she graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor's Degree in English.

In the summer of 2003, Emily returned to academia to begin Master's work in literature at the Florida State University. She received her Master's Degree in 2006 while commencing work on her doctorate in eighteenth-century British literature. Emily's research interests include: Florida eco-political satire, sentimental literature and politics in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, Augustan satire in England, the Victorian period in England, the literature of the long eighteenth century and the Restoration in England, feminisms and the history of protofeminist and feminist thought, gender and cultural studies.