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Eliza Haywood's *Female Spectator*: Between Literature and Journalism

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Abstract. Eliza Haywood, a famous English novelist of the 18th century, went down in the history of journalism as the author of the first women's periodical *The Female Spectator*. Despite Haywood's prominent contribution to the development of journalism, her experience in this area has remained virtually unnoticed in Russian scholarship. The purpose of this study is to examine the forms of Haywood's transformation when passing from a novel into a periodical writer with special attention to her ways of interacting with the readers. Based on the prime source and recent English-language research analysis, the author of the article comes to the conclusion that Haywood used a number of strategies when working out her magazine: she creates the images of a collective publisher and a collective reader, implements a program for educating a female audience, and masters new principles of presenting material and interacting with the reader. The necessity of transforming female novel lovers into readers of a new quality required Haywood to use, besides some literary techniques, a number of educational and didactic ones. Thus, she works hard on building up a new attitude to reading, educates the female audience by discussing a range of issues, and searches for a different, eluding obvious didacticism, form of interaction with her audience. Even though most of the material published in the *Female Spectator* remains of the literary origin, new characteristics of the periodical as a cultural and social control element emerge behind each of the listed techniques.

Keywords: Eliza Haywood, *The Female Spectator*, English women's magazines of the 18th century, first women's magazines, writer-reader interaction

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«Женский зритель» Элизы Хейвуд: между литературой и журналистикой

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Аннотация. Элиза Хэйвуд, известная английская романистка XVIII в., вошла в историю журналистики как автор первого женского журнала «Женский зритель». При значительности вклада Хэйвуд в развитие журналистики ее опыт в этой области в российской науке остался практически без внимания. Цель исследования – выявить формы и направленность перестройки Хэйвуд-романистки в автора журнала, обратив особое внимание на ее способы взаимодействия с читательской аудиторией. Анализируя первоисточник и обобщая последние исследования англоязычной критики, автор приходит к выводу, что Хэйвуд при создании журнала использовала целый ряд стратегий: создание образов коллективного издателя и коллективного читателя, реализация просветительской программы воспитания женской аудитории, освоение новых принципов подачи материала и взаимодействия с читателем. Перестройка читательниц романов в читателей нового качества потребовала от Хэйвуд использования не только литературных, но и просветительно-дидактических приемов: формирование нового отношения к чтению, просвещение женской аудитории через расширение круга обсуждаемых проблем, поиск иной, лишенной явной дидактичности, формы взаимодействия с нею. Несмотря на литературное происхождение большей части используемого материала, за каждым из перечисленных приемов вырисовываются функции журнала как нового органа культурной и общественной жизни.

Ключевые слова: Элиза Хейвуд, «Женский зритель», английские женские журналы XVIII в., первые женские журналы, формирование читательской аудитории

Заявление об отсутствии конфликта. Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

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Introduction

Since the 1970s, English women's periodicals of the eighteenth century have become the focus of attention in a variety of academic disciplines. The first and the most active researchers of the material were the promoters of feminist ideas who linked the fact of magazines' nascency with the beginning of

the women's protest movement against patriarchal oppression (Richetti, 1987; Schweickart, Flynn, 1986). For historians and sociologists, the phenomenon of women's periodicals gave the subject to speak about the level of women's education. In recent times, the female reading audience and its development in the eighteenth century have become objects of study for those who are often being called representatives of reader studies (Spedding, 2014; Sozinova, 2020). Historians of journalism also showered high interest in this heritage. Their studies focus on the dynamics of women's periodicals development, their transition from general, gender-neutral themes to specifically female (Sokolov, Vinogradova, 2000).

In this scientific context, *The Female Spectator*, the first periodical written for women by a woman, occupies a special position. Leaving aside the feminists' aspirations to present it as a 'space of freedom and protest', it is worth noting that in the Russian scientific field Haywood's periodical has never been the subject of close attention. While in the works of Russian scholars it is presented only as a starting point in the history of women's journalism¹ development, a periodical that is mentioned or – at best – briefly characterized in the studies devoted to the eighteenth century (Mikhailova, 2022; Sokolov, Vinogradova, 2000), in the English-language scientific field it has been the focus of long-lasting comprehensive and deep studies. The totality of what has been done is impressive (Blouch, 1996). The digitized version of the journal appeared in the Internet in free access (Haywood, 1745) allows Russian researchers to bridge the gap with English-speaking colleagues. This paper is the result of the author's introduction to the source.

Due to the recent efforts of Russian literary historians, Eliza Haywood (c. 1693–1756), the founder of the magazine, has been already introduced into the history of literature as a prolific English writer of the first half of the eighteenth century (Kosareva, 2022; Lutsenko, 2008; Sozinova, 2023). Until the 1840s, Haywood was known to English readers mainly as a novelist. Having debuted with a piece of amorous fiction *Love in Excess* (1719), Haywood firmly established herself on the literary scene in the 1720s as the author of a whole series of love stories that could more accurately be described, following Tony Bowers, as "sensational stories with sexual intrigue" (Bowers, 1994, p. 50). Not inferior to male writers in the boldness of her pen, Haywood showed herself in different genres (poems, pamphlets, adaptations for the theater)², still, by the end of the 1720s her name will be so firmly associated with the genre of novel (Beasley, 1982, p. 162) that H.G. Fielding modeled a character after her under the name 'Mrs. Novel' in his play *The Author's Farce* (1730).

¹ We have not found a single special study in Russian devoted to it, except for one review paper (Lutsenko, 2010).

² A complete bibliography of everything written by Haywood see in the book: Spedding (2004). See also: Blouch (1991).

On the one hand, Haywood's transition from literature to journalism is natural for the latter's development as a form of activity based on writing. On the other, it requires a large number of purely literary techniques which have already been much discussed about (Patchias, 2005; Shevelov, 1989). However, there is the third issue which is the need for other forms of interaction with the reader, different from that of the romance novel, or – in other words – the formation of a female audience as a periodical consumer, as well as the selection and development of new principles of presenting material. This article is devoted to examining these issues.

Results and Discussion

E. Haywood ran her *The Female Spectator* monthly for two years, from April 1744 to May 1746, and wrote 24 installments in total. The periodical happened to be the writer's "most successful commercial project" (King, 2001, p. 1), and found a huge positive response from readers. Publisher Thomas Gardner began reprinting its separate parts as early as 1745, and in 1745–1746 released a separate, book-length edition of the magazine in 4 volumes. Over the next 30 years, nine more reprints followed, along with publication in America and translations into German, French, and Italian.

The first issue (notably, Haywood, like other first journalists of the period, refers to each issue as a *book*) is conceived to create the images of both – the collective author and the collective reader. Haywood draws on preceding examples: John Dunton's *The Athenian Mercury* (1691), Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *The Spectator* (1711–1714), Delarivier Manley's (?) *The Female Tatler* (1709–1710) – journals published on behalf of a fictional group (club, society) of authors. Although Haywood is the sole author of the periodical, she creates the personas of four women whom she calls *authors* or *editors*. Three of them, as Christine Blouch notes, are primarily characterized by their marital status – widow, married lady, and maiden (Blouch, 2000, p. LXXII), and allow for the exploration of a woman's life in different representations and life experiences. The fourth is the I-publisher, a woman of no age or status, but with a past dominated by the pursuit of pleasure and 'promiscuous diversions': "My life, for some Years, was a continual Round of what I then called Pleasure, and my whole Time engross'd by a Hurry of promiscuous Diversions" (Haywood, 1745, p. 8). This biographical detail, crafted with the candor of a novel's protagonist, has at least two functions. On the one hand, it establishes a trusting relationship between the reader and the I-publisher. On the other, it enables discussion of a woman's life in different moral and existential dimensions – in the thoughtless, pleasure-seeking mode, and in the meaningful, based on reading and reflecting on it, one. The narrative is conducted from the perspective of this

character, ‘speaking for the entire community’: “several Members of one Body, of which I am the Mouth” (Haywood, 1745, p. 11).

The image of the collective reader is created through another technique, also employed by predecessors (Dunton, Addison, Steele, and Defoe the journalist) – readers’ letters. Although Catherine Shevelow believes that eighteenth-century readers did indeed write letters to periodicals’ editors (Shevelow, 1989, pp. 37–38), the authenticity of these letters remains a disputable issue. Regarding *The Female Spectator*, however, critics are unanimous: Haywood wrote all, or nearly all, of them herself (Spacks, 1999, p. XIII).

Each issue of the periodical includes, along with ‘responses’ or reactions to readers’ letters, one to three letters. Among them, there are many letters addressed to the heroines with Italianized names and signed with similar names. They are crafted either as purely literary texts or with clearly literary devices: elaborate stories include dialogues and poetry. There are ‘letters to the editor’ with a direct address *To the Female Spectator* and written on behalf of a person who seeks advice in response to a candid account of her problem. They contain a return address and can be signed with a telling surname, e.g., Sarah Oldfashion (Haywood, 1745, pp. 215–220). Some letters represent a reflective response to topics raised by other ‘correspondents’. The editors engage in dialogue with them, debate, and offer advice; the narrator conveys their positions and participates in the discussion. The range of covered topics is unusually wide and varies from the lofty (such as the immortality of the soul) to the mundane (such as excessive tea consumption), from purely feminine concerns – courtship and marriage – to moral and philosophical issues – gratitude to parents and human nature. Due to the mentioned techniques, Haywood creates the image of a female community capable of discussing various life issues as effectively as a male one. In addition, she transforms the female-reader herself, and the transformation goes from a novel reader, accustomed to engaging with purely fictional material, to a journal reader, engaged with the thick of contemporary issues and real-life material.

The journal’s mission is seen as purely educational – the upbringing of women by combining “both useful and entertaining to the public” (Haywood, 1745, p. 9). Behind the laconic formula, a whole program emerges. Haywood believes that a woman, with limited access to education, spiritually and intellectually undeveloped, will inevitably devote her leisure time solely to empty entertainment (dressing up, flirting, gossiping). Entertainment is her main pastime. Educating a woman, consequently, becomes possible when the focus of entertainment is changed, when entertainment is being combined with life observations and experience, and when a new, useful meaning aimed at understanding and improving woman’s nature and life is being extracted from

love stories. Hence, the first theme of the journal is the pleasure of reading and reading as pleasure which brings a lot of benefit for a woman.

The realization of this task is carried out by different artistic means including the use of names. There are many of them in Heywood's periodical and in different proportions: fictional or literary names predominate, while real ones are scarce.

The bearers of real names are a small number of philosophers, writers, and scientists mentioned in the journal (Herodotus, Socrates, Horace, Dryden, etc.). Their function is very simple and it is to give weight to Heywood's own reflections, as in the following example: "Socrates the philosopher was an instance of this truth, who being instance to all manner of intemperance, gained the victory by his reason and resolution over each inordinate passion, and was the pattern of virtue and abstemiousness" (Haywood, 1745, p. 190). The letters from correspondents are signed with telling names.

The names of the editors themselves (only two of them, maiden Euphrosyne and married lady Mira, are named), as well as those of the characters whose examples are used to analyze various life situations and women's mistakes, bear a clear mark of ancient and literary traditions. Most of the names, which sound French or Italian, are borrowed from love novels: Belinda, Adonis, Amadea, Tenderilla, Rinaldo, Clitander, Cristabella, Flavio, Palmira, Fidelia, Erminia, etc. The stories associated with them often resemble either plots from Haywood's own novels, or the scenes from popular classics, e.g. Richardson's *Pamela*, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. However, it is through this literary entertainment and literary 'setting' that the main task of the journal – 'to instruct while entertaining' – is seemed to be realized.

Almost all the stories are love stories revolving around courtship and marriage, and are devoted to the issue of passion and reason in a woman's life. Haywood, as Anna Patchias rightly notes, does not impose any moral lesson on her readers, leaving them the right to draw their own conclusions (Patchias, 2005, pp. 56–69). However, the life outcome, that the heroine of a particular 'life' story reaches, does not leave any opportunity to go beyond the moral lesson set by the author.

The book version of the journal is accompanied by the *Index* which is not a table of contents, but a list. It enumerates in alphabetical order the names mentioned in the journal and the plots associated with them, as well as the moral and social themes touched upon. Thus, alongside *Erminia, how ruined, Clitander, successful in Love-Affairs*, and *Imperio, a Lover of Beauty*, one finds *British Ladies, different from what they were formerly, French Ladies, seldom make an ill Use of Liberty*, and *France, the many innocent Diversions to be found there*. References to discussions on moral and philosophical themes such as *Good Nature, what it is, Nature corrupted by the Passions*, or *Body, how far*

influenced by the Mind are interspersed with observations on human behavior and social customs, as in the following headings: *Life, What Time of it is best for Improvement, Good Breeding inferior to Reputation, Country Ladies easily seduced*. In addition, one can find: *Examples of unhappy Marriages, Climate in England, the same as ever, or Mode, not always to be followed* (Haywood, 1745, pp. 323–330). Many of the ‘article’ titles adhere to the principles of a journal headline. They are concise and aimed at revealing the essence of the discussed topic. Following them, one can note, that this is precisely how Haywood’s journal is structured – as a blend of literary material and life observations, on the one hand, and on the other, as a mixture of brief information from science, philosophy, European life, and reflections on various topics. The literary component significantly predominates. However, in the combination of literary elements and informational content, “Information mingled with Delight”, as Haywood puts it (Haywood, 1745, p. 9), the difficulties of the transitional period are reflected, i.e. the transformation of both the writer and her readers in their shift from literature to journalism.

Conclusion

The observations made allow me to conclude that working on her periodical Haywood employs different strategies: she creates images of a collective publisher and a collective reader, implements an educational program for her target audience, and adopts new principles for presenting material. The experience of the writer, well-versed in crafting women’s love novels, is evident throughout. At the same time, Haywood demonstrates a clear understanding of a periodical as an object distinct in its nature from literature, which urges her to search for new forms of interaction with the reader. She replaces the image of the narrator (storyteller), characteristic of the novel, by the image of a collective publisher as a group of women with different life experiences, ready to engage in a sincere and interested conversation and respond to the requests of their readers-interlocutors. The transformation of the traditional fiction readers into the readers of a periodical required, along with literary techniques – creating the image of a female reading community and composing letters to the editor, some educational and didactic ones: fostering a new attitude towards reading, educating the female audience by expanding the range of discussed issues, and seeking a different, trusting, and non-overtly didactic form of interaction with readers. Behind each of these techniques, the functions of the periodical as a new organ of cultural and social life emerge: informational, cultural, educational, communicative, and entertaining. Finally, Haywood seeks new ways to present journal material. She ‘dissects’ novel stories into typical life situations or examples, intersperses material of different themes, and learns (in the *Index*) to formulate concise and comprehensive headlines.

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