



Feminist Interpretations of Mary Astell (Re-Reading the Canon)

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Often referred to as a proto-feminist, early modern English philosopher and rhetorician Mary Astell was a pious supporter of monarchy who wrote about gender equality at a time when society tightly constrained female agency. This diverse collection of essays situates her ideas in feminist, historical, and philosophical contexts.

Focusing on Astell's work and thought, this book explores the degree to which she can be considered a "feminist" in light of her adherence to Cartesianism, Christian theology, and Tory politics. The contributors explore the philosophical underpinnings of Astell's outspoken advocacy for the autonomy and education of women; examine the intricacies underlying her theories of power, community, and female resistance to unlawful authority; and reveal the similarities between her own philosophy of gender and sexual politics and feminist theorizing today.

A broad-ranging look at one of the most important female writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this volume will be especially valuable to students and scholars of feminist history and philosophy and the early modern era.

Aside from the editors, the contributors are Kathleen A. Ahearn, Jacqueline Broad, Karen Detlefsen, Susan Paterson Glover, Marcy P. Lascano, Elisabeth Hedrick Moser, Christine Mason Sutherland, and Nancy Tuana.

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