

Dr. Kathryn King

Eliza Haywood at the Sign of Fame; or, The Possibilities of Political Biography

Best known as the author of scandal chronicles and racy amatory fictions, Eliza Haywood (1693?-1756) seems at first an odd candidate for a political biography. But it turns out that in spite of her disclaimer that she “never wrote any thing in a political way,” Haywood was immersed in oppositional politics almost from the start of her long career as marketplace writer. Her works offer a distinctively female perspective on public and private life, forge links between party-political networks and the worlds of the drawing room, tea table, and conversational circle, and expose the misogyny of much political thought even as they craft new identities for women in the political nation.