



Love / Religious Faith, Nature of in Mary Astell (1666–1731)

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Mary Astell felt that much of what was written and said about marriage during her time was based on an incomplete understanding of the relations between men and women. Hence love as a basis for marriage would have needed a firm grasp of the natural equality that Astell believed inhered between men and women—to this end she wrote “Some Reflections upon Marriage.” She felt strongly that this equality was spelled out in the New Testament. In the same vein, she felt that all humans were equally capable of understanding the divine though religious faith, something that would occur intuitively. Her beliefs often placed her at odds with those around her, and are probably somewhat more comprehensible to us when we remember that she was largely self-taught and self-educated and had moved to high social circles in Great Britain and begun working on her own. This may have pushed forward her tendency to think along the lines of High Anglicanism.

Primary Sources:

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Duran, Jane 2005. *Eight Women Philosophers*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

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