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Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter (Paperback)

By Cynthia J. Lowenthal

University of Georgia Press, United States, 2010. Paperback. Condition: New. Reprint. Language: English. Brand new Book. This is the first critical study of one of the most important women writers of the early eighteenth century, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), who produced a body of erudite and entertaining correspondence that spanned more than fifty years. Lady Mary's letters illuminate the difficulties encountered by a sensitive, intelligent, and gifted woman writer living through an era of significant cultural change. These letters display the tensions inherent in the competing demands of public and private life, revealing Lady Mary's own discomfort about the problems of authorship and authority in an age that held publication to be an improper activity for respectable women. Through the discourse of supposedly "private" letters, Lady Mary was able to find an avenue for her talents that brought her "public" stature without violating the imperatives of her position as a woman and an aristocrat. Cynthia Lowenthal argues persuasively that Lady Mary's letters, themselves central to the establishment of the familiar letter as an important eighteenth-century genre, were self-consciously constructed as literary artifacts and crafted as part of a larger female epistolary tradition. Moreover, Lowenthal contends, the works of Lady...



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