COLETTE

Women Writers

General Editors: *Eva Figes* and *Adele King*

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Margaret Atwood, Barbara Hill Rigney
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Charlotte Brontë, Pauline Nestor
Emily Brontë, Lyn Pykett
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Willa Cather, Susie Thomas
Colette, Diana Holmes
Emily Dickinson, Joan Kirkby
Sylvia Plath, Susan Bassnett
Christina Stead, Diana Brydon
Eudora Welty, Louise Westling
Edith Wharton, Katherine Joslin
Women in Romanticism, Meena Alexander

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Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Marjorie Stone
Elizabeth Bowen, Phyllis Lassner
Ivy Compton Burnett, Kathy Gentile
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Mrs Gaskell, Jane Spencer
Katherine Mansfield, Diane DeBell
Christina Rossetti, Linda Marshall
Jean Rhys, Carol Rumens
Muriel Spark, Judith Sproxton
Gertrude Stein, Jane Bowers
Virginia Woolf, Clare Hanson

Further titles are in preparation

Women Writers

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Diana Holmes

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MACMILLAN

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Editors' Preface

The study of women's writing has been long neglected by a male critical establishment both in academic circles and beyond. As a result, many women writers have either been unfairly neglected or have been marginalised in some way, so that their true influence and importance has been ignored. Other women writers have been accepted by male critics and academics, but on terms which seem, to many women readers of this generation, to be false or simplistic. In the past the internal conflicts involved in being a woman in a male-dominated society have been largely ignored by readers of both sexes, and this has affected our reading of women's work. The time has come for a serious reassessment of women's writing in the light of what we understand today.

This series is designed to help in that reassessment.

All the books are written by women because we believe that men's understanding of feminist critique is only, at best, partial. And besides, men have held the floor quite long enough.

EVA FIGES
ADELE KING

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In memory of Mary
1949–1989

For hadn't niggardly love wanted to fill my cupped hands
one last time with a little shrivelled treasure? In future
I shall gather nothing except by armfuls. Great armfuls
of wind, of coloured atoms, of generous emptiness that
I shall dump proudly on the threshing floor.

Colette
Break of Day