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978-0-521-15276-1 - Literature, Gender and Politics During the English Civil War

Diane Purkiss

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LITERATURE, GENDER AND POLITICS DURING
THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

In this innovative study, Diane Purkiss illuminates the role of gender in the English Civil War by focusing on ideas of masculinity, rather than on the role of women, which has hitherto received more attention. Historians have tended to emphasise a model of human action in the Civil War based on the idea of the human self as rational animal. Purkiss reveals the irrational ideological forces governing the way seventeenth-century writers understood the state, the monarchy, the battlefield and the epic hero in relation to contested contemporary ideas of masculinity. She analyses representations of masculinity in the writings of Marvell, Waller, Herrick and the Caroline elegists, as well as in newsbooks and pamphlets, and pays particular attention to Milton's complex responses to the dilemmas of male identity. This study will appeal to scholars of seventeenth-century literature as well as those working in intellectual history and the history of gender.

DIANE PURKISS is a Fellow of Keble College, Oxford, and University Lecturer in English at Oxford University. She has published widely on women's writing in the Renaissance and on witchcraft. Her most recent book was *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (2000).

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Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> vi
Introduction	i
1 Dismembering and remembering: the English Civil War and male identity	32
2 Republican politics	52
3 Opening the king’s cabinet	71
4 Charles I	98
5 Cromwell	131
6 Monsters and men	163
7 Milton and monsters	186
8 Matthew Hopkins and the panic about witches	210
Conclusion	229
<i>Notes</i>	236
<i>Index</i>	289

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