

THE MASCULINITIES OF JOHN MILTON

The Masculinities of John Milton is the first published monograph on Milton's men. Examining how Milton's fantasies of manly authority are framed in his major works, this study exposes the gaps between Milton's pleas for liberty and his assumptions that White men like himself should rule his culture. From schoolboys teaching each other how to traffic in young women in the *Ludlow Masque*, to his treatises on divorce that make the wifeless husband the best possible citizen, and to the later epics, in which Milton wrestles with male small talk and the ladders of masculine social power, his verse and prose draw from and amplify his culture's claims about manliness in education, warfare, friendship, citizenship, and conversation. This revolutionary poet's most famous writings reveal how ambivalently manhood is constructed to serve itself in early modern England.

ELIZABETH HODGSON is Professor of English Literature at the University of British Columbia (UBC). She has published *Gender and the Sacred Self in John Donne* (1999), *Grief and Women Writers in the English Renaissance* (2015), and many articles and book chapters on English Renaissance literary cultures.

THE MASCULINITIES OF JOHN MILTON

Cultures and Constructs of Manhood in the Major Works

ELIZABETH HODGSON

University of British Columbia, Vancouver



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
 978-1-009-22359-1 — The Masculinities of John Milton
 Elizabeth Hodgson
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
 a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
 education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009223591

DOI: 10.1017/9781009223577

© Elizabeth Hodgson 2022

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions
 of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take
 place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2022

First paperback edition 2025

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

NAMES: Hodgson, Elizabeth, 1962– author.

TITLE: The masculinities of John Milton : cultures and constructs of
 manhood in the major works / Elizabeth Hodgson.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge
 University Press, 2022. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2022022859 | ISBN 9781009223584 (hardback) |
 ISBN 9781009223577 (ebook)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Milton, John, 1608–1674 – Criticism and interpretation. |
 Masculinity in literature. | Men in literature. | English poetry – Early
 modern, 1500–1700 – History and criticism. | BISAC: LITERARY CRITICISM /
 European / English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh | LCGFT: Literary criticism.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PR3592.M35 H64 2022 | DDC 821/.4–dc23/eng/20220720
 LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022022859>

ISBN 978-1-009-22358-4 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-22359-1 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
 or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
 publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will
 remain, accurate or appropriate.

In memory of Gordon Wilkie Stewart, 1928–2019

The just man walketh in his integrity:
his children are blessed after him.

Proverbs 20:7

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page viii</i>
Introduction	i
1 Peer Review: The <i>Ludlow Masque</i>	27
2 Nearly Headless Husbands: The Divorce Tracts	56
3 Chatting Up: <i>Paradise Lost</i>	84
4 True Warfaring Christian: <i>Areopagitica</i> and <i>Paradise Regained</i>	119
5 Lean on Me: <i>Samson Agonistes</i>	145
Postlude: Pity the Tale of Milton	174
<i>Bibliography</i>	190
<i>Index</i>	214

Acknowledgments

This work has been completed on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəy̓əm (Musqueam) and Coast Salish peoples; my first debt of gratitude as a settler of Scottish descent is to these communities who continue to care for this land.

Also close to home, my thanks to the UBC library staff, nobly gathering dozens of books and articles for me while the library was closed due to the pandemic. I am also grateful to my area colleagues at University of British Columbia (UBC): Patsy Badir, Dennis Britton, Stephen Guy-Bray, Vin Nardizzi, and Mark Vessey – for their friendship, wit, and knowledge. I am thankful likewise to Dennis Danielson, who even in retirement keeps introducing me to new circles of Milton scholars. My gratitude to Maggie Kilgour, Katie Larson, Mary Nyquist, Paul Stevens, and others at the Canadian Milton Symposium for teaching me so much and for inspiring me to write this work. Ditto the many international Miltonists (you know who you are) for being uniformly learned, generous, and encouraging. Thanks as well to Hannah McGregor and Marcelle Kosman, whose provocative podcasts on literary feminism really helped to energize my thinking for this book. A special nod here also to Kira, Jack, Benson, Thomas, and Philip, who probed Milton’s masculinities so energetically and intelligently in my “Milton between Men” graduate seminar.

I have been thinking recently of my own now rather distant days in graduate school at Brandeis University, and I want especially to acknowledge my dear friend and brilliant PhD colleague Brandie Siegfried, taken from us far too soon by cancer, from whom I learned more than I can ever say about how to be a feminist scholar of Renaissance culture.

And then, of course, there are the constants in my life now, my dear friends and family, especially my partner Tony and my now-grown children Jim and Kate, who put up with my explaining, over dinner or on our Saturday morning Zoom breakfasts, the latest tangle or triumph of the book. I know you listen because you care. That is a great gift. Bless you all.

Acknowledgments

ix

Likewise to my parents, Gordon and Donna Stewart, who have always been curious, thoughtful, engaged, and inspiring in your concern for the world. You have indeed in your lives sought justice, loved mercy, and walked humbly with your God. You are a gift to all who know you, and I would not be the scholar I am today had you not simply assumed that I could do it – that I *would* do it.

Three small excerpts of my previously published book chapters have found new homes in these pages. My thanks to Ashgate Publishing, University of Toronto Press, and the University of Nebraska Press for permission to briefly cite my former self in a new context.

Lastly, I have been guided to this point by the generous editors and expert readers of Cambridge University Press; this debt of thoughtful and intelligent reading can never be repaid. Of course, in a project with this scope, there will undoubtedly be a major scholar I have missed, an important collection somehow uncited, an excellent conference paper misremembered. So I seek here a little prevenient grace from you, dear reader, for when the inevitable occurs.