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Milton's Secrecy

And Philosophical Hermeneutics

James Dougal Fleming, Simon Fraser University

Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity

"Superbly learned and lucid... Fleming brilliantly explores the modern logic of discovery that construes knowing as the disclosure of the secret hidden beneath surfaces and between the lines—the hermeneutic of suspicion, of scientific reductionism, of Straussian esotericism, of psychoanalysis, deconstruction and original intent. Through a dazzling analysis of Milton's own 'root-and-branch opposition to secrecy,' he reconstructs the unfamiliar hermeneutics of early modern Protestantism."

—Debora Shuger, University of California, Los Angeles, author of *Censorship and Cultural Sensibility* and *Political Theologies in Shakespeare's England*

"Fleming counters the quest to reveal the text's secret meaning—and the deconstructive skepticism that results from that quest's inevitable failure—by opening up its internal dialogue, the play of question and answer through which we recognize and respond to the words we read."

—Donald Marshall, Seaver College, Pepperdine University

Scientific modernity treats interpretation as a matter of discovery. Discovery, however, may not be all that matters about interpretation. In *Milton's Secrecy*, J.D. Fleming argues that the poetry and prose of John Milton (1608–1674) are about the presentation of a radically different hermeneutic model. This is based on openness within language, rather than on secrets within the world. Milton's representations of meaning are exoteric, not esoteric; cognitive, not inventive. *Milton's Secrecy* places its titular subject in opposition to the epistemology of modern natural science and to the interpretative assumptions that science supports.

Contents:

Foreword;
Introduction: against secrecy;
Expressing the conscience;
The armor of intention;
The armor of intension;
Talking and learning in Paradise;
Conclusion: secrecy again?;
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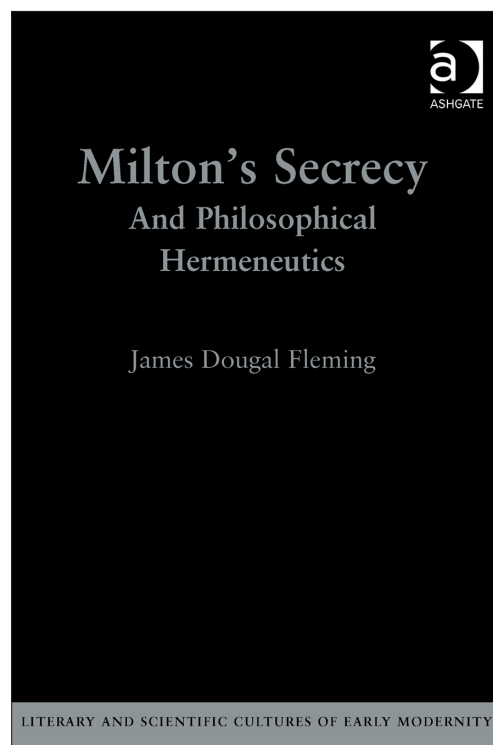
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