



Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man (Contraversions: Critical Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture, and Society)

By Daniel Boyarin



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In a book that will both enlighten and provoke, Daniel Boyarin offers an alternative to the prevailing Euroamerican warrior/patriarch model of masculinity and recovers the Jewish ideal of the gentle, receptive male. The Western notion of the aggressive, sexually dominant male and the passive female reaches back through Freud to Roman times, but as Boyarin makes clear, such gender roles are not universal. Analyzing ancient and modern texts, he reveals early rabbis—studious, family-oriented—as exemplars of manhood and the prime objects of female desire in traditional Jewish society.

Challenging those who view the "feminized Jew" as a pathological product of the Diaspora or a figment of anti-Semitic imagination, Boyarin argues that the Diaspora produced valuable alternatives to the dominant cultures' overriding gender norms. He finds the origins of the rabbinic model of masculinity in the Talmud, and though unrelentingly critical of rabbinic society's oppressive aspects, he shows how it could provide greater happiness for women than the passive gentility required by bourgeois European standards.

Boyarin also analyzes the self-transformation of three iconic Viennese modern Jews: Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis; Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism; and Bertha Pappenheim (Anna O.), the first psychoanalytic patient and founder of Jewish feminism in Germany. Pappenheim is Boyarin's hero: it is she who provides him with a model for a militant feminist, anti-homophobic transformation of Orthodox Jewish society today.

Like his groundbreaking *Carnal Israel*, this book is talmudic scholarship in a whole new light, with a vitality that will command attention from readers in feminist studies, history of sexuality, Jewish culture, and the history of psychoanalysis.



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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Boyarin (Talmudic culture, Berkeley) argues that modern Jewish culture has assimilated the macho male ethos of Western civilization. The result is the creation of the "muscle Jew," which divorces Jewish men from their emphasis on study, prayer, and gentleness. Ironically, in an effort to counter the anti-Semitic image of the so-called "Jewish wimp," Jewish men have abetted a process of internal colonization of Jewish culture by mainstream Christian culture and have adopted the anti-Semites' aggressive heterosexuality. Boyarin advocates a re-creation of the early Jewish male culture, based on the Talmud, which did not see inherent virtue in sports or aggressive behavior, and which he believes also lacked homophobia. In the process, he hopes traditional Jewish culture can also re-create itself without resorting to misogyny. A provocative work that will inspire controversy; strongly recommended for Judaica collections. —Frederic Krome, Northern Kentucky Univ., Highland Heights
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Review

"A work of immense importance, all at once astonishingly erudite, witty, playful and boldly speculative. As its reputation spreads, it's beginning to roil the waters far beyond Talmudic studies." —"Nation, 5/20

From the Inside Flap

"Daniel Boyarin's work has been instrumental in opening a way for me into Jewish thinking, Jewish history, and Judaism itself. . . . His is a thoroughly dazzling intellect: a scholar, a critical and political thinker, a wit, and a wonderful, passionate writer." —Tony Kushner, author of *Angels in America*

"Few commentators on the vexed issue of Judaism and gender bring as much passion, courage, and audacity to their work as does Daniel Boyarin. . . . Whatever his or her religious and sexual identity, the reader of *Unheroic Conduct* cannot fail to be touched by the explosive power of what Boyarin impishly calls 'Jewissance.'" —Martin Jay, author of *Downcast Eyes*

"Whether citing the ancient Sage Johanan, taking issue with the Zionist Theodor Herzl, or approving the feminist Bertha Pappenheim, Boyarin invites his readers into a lively, generous, and often humorous debate. Here Orthodox Judaism is both celebrated and transformed." —Natalie Zemon Davis, author of *Women on the Margins*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Stacey Lawrence:

The reason? Because this *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man (Contraversions: Critical Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture, and Society)* is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap this but latter it will distress you with the secret that inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who all write the book in such awesome way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is

good for you because of not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book have such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to hold up having that book? If I were you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

Alan Sours:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with pals is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man (Contraversions: Critical Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture, and Society), you can enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout men. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its called reading friends.

Lupe Holloway:

Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man (Contraversions: Critical Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture, and Society) can be one of your starter books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this guide has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining however delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort to place every word into joy arrangement in writing Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man (Contraversions: Critical Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture, and Society) nevertheless doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can easily drawn you into completely new stage of crucial contemplating.

William Lebel:

The book untitled Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man (Contraversions: Critical Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture, and Society) contain a lot of information on it. The writer explains your girlfriend idea with easy technique. The language is very simple to implement all the people, so do not really worry, you can easy to read this. The book was written by famous author. The author provides you in the new age of literary works. You can actually read this book because you can read on your smart phone, or model, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can open up their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice learn.

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