



The Unconverted Self: Jews, Indians, and the Identity of Christian Europe

Jonathan Boyarin

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Europe's formative encounter with its "others" is still widely assumed to have come with its discovery of the peoples of the New World. But, as Jonathan Boyarin argues, long before 1492 Christian Europe imagined itself in distinction to the Jewish difference within. The presence and image of Jews in Europe afforded the Christian majority a foil against which it could refine and maintain its own identity. In fundamental ways this experience, along with the ongoing contest between Christianity and Islam, shaped the rhetoric, attitudes, and policies of Christian colonizers in the New World.

The Unconverted Self proposes that questions of difference inside Christian Europe not only are inseparable from the painful legacy of colonialism but also reveal Christian domination to be a fragile construct. Boyarin compares the Christian efforts aimed toward European Jews and toward indigenous peoples of the New World, bringing into focus the intersection of colonial expansion with the Inquisition and adding significant nuance to the entire question of the colonial encounter.

Revealing the crucial tension between the Jews as "others within" and the Indians as "others without," *The Unconverted Self* is a major reassessment of early modern European identity.

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