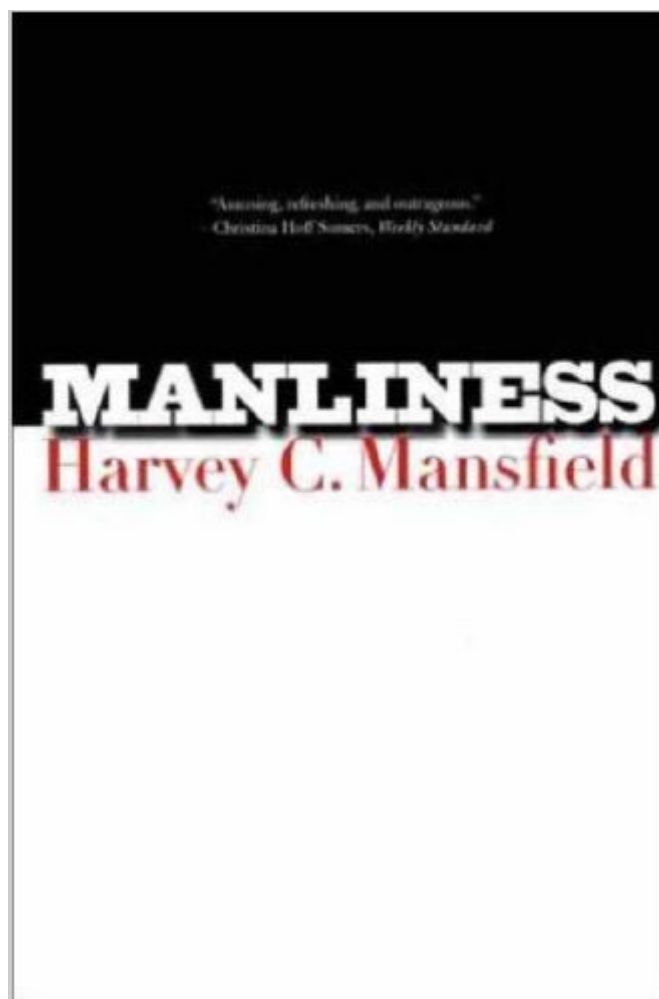


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# Manliness



## Synopsis

This book invites—and demands—a response from its readers. It is impossible not to be drawn in to the provocative (often contentious) discussion that Harvey Mansfield sets before us. This is the first comprehensive study of manliness, a quality both bad and good, mostly male, often intolerant, irrational, and ambitious. Our “gender-neutral society” does not like it but cannot get rid of it. Drawing from science, literature, and philosophy, Mansfield examines the layers of manliness, from vulgar aggression, to assertive manliness, to manliness as virtue, and to philosophical manliness. He shows that manliness seeks and welcomes drama, prefers times of war, conflict, and risk, and brings change or restores order at crucial moments. Manly men in their assertiveness raise issues, bring them to the fore, and make them public and political—as for example, the manliness of the women’s movement. After a wide-ranging tour from stereotypes to Hemingway and Achilles, to Nietzsche, to feminism, and to Plato, the author returns to today’s problem of “unemployed manliness.” Formulating a reasoned defense of a quality hardly obedient to reason, he urges men, and especially women, to understand and accept manliness, and to give it honest and honorable employment.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For the sake of disclosure, I have not read the entire book yet, but went through it quickly, and know its tone and content. Also, I am a free-thinking, liberal, confident female, who (to paraphrase Mansfield) has studied men all my life (40+ years). I love men, and yet find many of them just tragically confused, unaware of what being a man is all about. This book is worth reading by anyone

who is interested in gender relations -- and aren't we all. It does not appear to me that it is an anti-woman book, as the first reviewer (below) suggests. I absolutely agree with Mansfield's opinion that being a man is about having "confidence in risky situations". That negative reviewer was totally on shaky grounds (logic-wise) arguing that it is an insult to women (because to her, it meant that Mansfield thinks that courage is just a masculine trait). Women can be as courageous, or more, as men. But that's not the issue. The issue is that if you are a woman, and you happen to be shy, timid, or downright cowardly, you can still feel like a woman -- i.e. feminine, true to your gender. Courage is not expected of women in our culture to the extent it is expected of men (though I hope it will gradually change because it is a sign of inequality). Many people -- men or women - have a hard time differentiating, on the gut level, between courage that may entail physical danger, and emotional/intellectual courage. Someone who is weaker physically may instinctively shy away from sticking his/her head out.

I strongly disagree with the arguments and conclusions in Mansfield's book. I give it four stars because it is a well-argued and well-organized book on an important topic. Mansfield does a great service because he lays bare for us the moral and ethical and philosophical roots of his version of "manliness," and in the process of reading and re-reading his book and finding where I disagree with him, it helped me think more clearly about what I do consider real manliness and courage. And that's what a good book should do. Most of us know from real-life experience that the biggest bullies are often some of the most insecure males (and females) around. Read the book "Warriors, Workers, Whiners and Weasels" *Warriors, Workers, Whiners, & Weasels: Understanding and Using The Four Personality Types To Your Advantage* and you'll quickly recognize the ones most likely to seize on Mansfield's arguments about "manly" men will often be the insecure weasels rather than the warriors. When you unpack it, the book *Manliness* really amounts to an elaborate set of excuses for Napoleon, Hitler, the neighborhood bully, and any other insecure males (or females) out there. These are the first ones to be overly concerned about what everyone thinks of them and want to convince everyone their pushy obnoxious and deceitful actions are a sign of strength, rather than an outgrowth of their huge inner doubts and insecurity. Mansfield opens his book with tales about brave and tragic heroes in Greek legend.

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