

(Library ebook) Meat: A Natural Symbol

## Meat: A Natural Symbol

*Nick Fiddes*

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**MEAT**



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**Nick Fiddes : Meat: A Natural Symbol** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Meat: A Natural Symbol:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good summary of all aspects of meat in society, as relevant today as when written. By Einstein's pal Society has moved on in many ways since this book was published, and yet humanity seems so ignorant in developing a universal acceptance of sentience. With the changing politics of this year, perhaps if humans don't heed the message in this informative book, will be the human meat that will perish.

This book is a broad-ranging and provocative study of the human passion for meat. It will intrigue anyone who has ever wondered why meat is important to us; why we eat some animals but not others; why vegetarianism is increasing; why we aren't cannibals; and how meat is associated with environmental destruction.

From Library Journal In this thought-provoking study of the sociocultural aspects of meat-eating in Western--primarily British and American--culture, Fiddes (social anthropology, Edinburgh) argues that meat symbolizes the human (and fundamentally patriarchal) desire for control over the natural world. He concludes that because meat represents supremacy over nature, attitudes about meat have begun to change, along with a shift in social values away from industrialism and its reliance on a model of human supremacy, toward more ecologically sound ways of life. The book provides an absorbing survey of the social forces behind meat eating, including discussions of its historical, economic, political, religious, physiological, and sexual connotations. Fiddes's argument would have been more powerful had he drawn less frequently on the words of others and had he attributed his quotations from nonscholars. Still, this will be of particular interest to vegetarians, environmentalists, and feminists. Recommended for general collections in anthropology, sociology, and gastronomy.- Ellen Finnie Duranceau, MIT Lib. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Kirkus s Though not a vegetarian himself, Fiddes (Social Anthropology/ Edinburgh Univ.) has wondered at the vehemence with which vegetarianism is often dismissed as a fad, attacked as a conspiracy, or worse. In this sound inquiry, he examines the unstated symbolic importance that meat has for all of us, determining why we do or do not eat it and how we think, feel, and behave regarding it. While discoursing along the way on such matters as our views on cannibalism; our exemption of pets, primates, and carnivores from the edible animal category; and our association of meat with different aspects of sex, the sexes, and relations between them, Fiddes sees meat chiefly as a symbol and element of human mastery over nature. (Thus the cruel and bloody aspect of meat is not a regrettable side effect but essential to its role.) Meat-eating, he notes, increased in practice and prestige during the Industrial Revolution, with its emphasis on mastering and transforming nature. Earlier, when people had more to fear from wild animals and natural forces, meat killing and eating was a comforting symbol of control. But now that we are recognizing the environmental destruction caused by the abuse of human power over nature, meat-eating is declining--a trend, Fiddes suggests, that could be the ``harbinger of the evolution of new values." Harbinger or no, Fiddes's discussion of all this is perceptive and sensible. As for the common dangers of this sort of undertaking--pedantic obscurity, belaboring the obvious, sounding far-fetched--he triumphantly avoids them all. (Illustrations--not seen.) -- Copyright 1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.