



Fat: The Anthropology of an Obsession

Don Kulick, Anne Meneley

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An eclectic and highly original examination of one of the most dynamic concepts-and constructs-in the world.

With more than one billion overweight adults in the world today, obesity has become an epidemic. But fat is not as straightforward-or even as uni-versally damned-as one might think. Enlisting thirteen anthropologists and a fat activist, editors and anthropologists Don Kulick and Anne Meneley have produced an unconventional-and unprecedented-examination of fat in various cultural and social contexts. In this anthology, these writers argue that fat is neither a mere physical state nor an inert concept. Instead, it is a construct built by culture and judged in courts of public opinion, courts whose laws vary from society to society.

From the anthropology of "fat-talk" among teenage girls in Sweden to the veneration of Spam in Hawaii; from fear of the fat-sucking pishtaco vampire in the Andes to the underground allure of fat porn stars like Supersize Betsy-this anthology provides fresh perspectives on a subject more complex than love handles, and less easily understood than a number on a scale. Fat proves that fat can be beautiful, evil, pornographic, delicious, shameful, ugly, or magical. It all depends on who-and where-you are.

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