

Faculti Summary

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This video is a transcript of an interview with Jordan, who discusses the motivations behind his book on the cultural significance of pigs, particularly in Jewish and non-Jewish identity. The conversation begins with an introduction to the context and the date, August 23rd, around 3 PM in London.

Jordan explains that his interest in the topic started nearly 20 years ago when he was researching food laws in ancient texts, specifically focusing on how pigs were discussed by ancient rabbis and Romans in relation to identity. He accumulated various anecdotes and facts over the years, highlighting how discussions around pigs often generated curiosity and engagement in his talks.

The interview further explores how pigs have been used as a metaphor over time, especially as a symbol of humiliation in Jewish contexts. Jordan argues that while pigs are rarely mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, their significance grew during the Second Temple period, particularly through stories of martyrdom. He explains how the pig became emblematic of Jewish identity and Jewish dietary laws, while also being a tool for external mockery in medieval Christian contexts.

Jordan emphasizes that the symbolic value of pigs continues to evolve and remains relevant today. He discusses contemporary implications, such as the cultural reaction to “impossible pork” products, which raise questions about identity and the routine eating habits of different cultures. He concludes by expressing hopes that readers will appreciate the depth of the narrative around pigs and consider the broader implications of food choices and identity narratives in their lives.

The conversation also hints at the potential for future research on pigs and food studies more generally, suggesting a need for both micro and macro studies of food's symbolic meanings in different cultures. Jordan invites further exploration and scholarship on the topic, encouraging others to join the dialogue about the cultural weight of food and identity.