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Clay Straus Jenkinson
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Clay Straus Jenkinson : The Character of Meriwether Lewis: "Completely Metamorphosed" in the American West before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Character of Meriwether Lewis: "Completely Metamorphosed" in the American West:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Inside the Mind of Meriwether LewisBy Daniel HurleyAs Jenkinson

notes in his Acknowledgements, "This is a humanities essay, an expression of a perspective" learned over the course of his career thanks to the National Endowment for the Humanities. Jenkinson, who portrays Jefferson on NPR radio wonderfully in the first person, writes a detailed analysis on the character of Lewis in this short but incitefully detailed book. This is not a full biography but a breakdown of the characteristics of Lewis that by the end of the book help the reader understand why Lewis deemed himself a failure to the point of committing suicide. Jenkinson covers Lewis' perception of his role in the expedition, his relationship with Clark, various Indian tribes, views on sex, relationships with women, his final role as governor of Louisiana and Lewis' perception of himself, quite often utilizing Lewis' own words. The posed picturer of Lewis on the cover of the book with an animal skin draped more for show across his chest than for warmth seems to capture the sentiment of a highly intelligent aristocrat in the wilderness. In contrast to Clark who takes his role seriously yet within the general purpose of exploration, Lewis seems to look at the exploration constantly in reference to himself. In Jenkinson's book, Lewis seems to have a troubled temperment and a superior attitude toward the Indians and men in his company. He prefers the study of birds and animals to the Indian culture that he meets. He also seems concious of his need to be first as an explorer, sharing roles of leadership with Clark but not important points of discovery. Lewis undoubtedly contributed largely to the great success of the journey with his intellect and trained eye for biology but he also is tainted with melancholly. Jenkinson is very fair not to attribute today's typical pyschological diagnosis on Lewis as he states it is unfair to apply today's standards to times 200 years ago but he details a troubled mind that seems to come apart with alcohol, lack of a long term companionship, specifically women, and his non-military role as Governor of Louisiana. Combined with writer's block, his guarding of the Lewis and Clark written journey, his poor relations with civilians within and outside his administration, Jenkinson concludes that it all may have been too much for Lewis who was battling not only for reimbursements but his political life. Jekinson concludes that like Buzz Aldrin, the second man on the moon, Lewis didn't quite receive the recognition he felt due him and that he also reached his "zenith" too soon in life at age 32.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Clay's Magnum OpusBy Dakota MarieClay Jenkinson makes history accessible and interesting for the "non-professional" history buff. His writing is lucid and compelling, with wonderful incorporation of both classical references (Hamlet!), and contemporary humor (without excess). As a self-confessed Lewis "fan" and a "suicidist", he nevertheless is extremely fair to the excellent character of Clark, and respectful of those he terms "murderists". Even though he strongly presents the case for suicide, he was fair enough to the murder theory, that I found myself able to see how murder might actually be the cause of Lewis' (unsolved irresolvable) reason for death. Clay is to be commended for his ability to use contemporary social scientific knowledge about mental illness and causal factors for suicide without the odious current fad for applying contemporary DSM IV diagnostic categories to historical personages. He sketches the personality and moral characteristics of both Lewis and Clark so vividly, I can almost "see" either man acting as an individual, rather than the fuzzy lewisandclark image I've had from previous readings about their "late tour". I found Clay Jenkinson's study of Lewis to be comprehensive, interesting, fair, and well-rooted in analysis of historical materials. I hope everyone enjoys it as much as I did!!18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. When you've been to the Missouri, what's left?By Therese YeatonIf all history books were like this, we would all be avid students of history. I found myself wishing that this book was 500 pages long, because it was so interesting and enjoyable to read. If you have any interest in American history I would highly recommend this book. If you have no interest in American history, I would still recommend it!The suicide of Meriwether Lewis has always been one of the more tragic and interesting mysteries of American history. Clay Jenkinson, in this book on the character of Lewis, is witty, profound, insightful, and highly readable. We learn about Lewis' interest in food, his views on Indians and women, his longing for an important place in history, his drinking and most importantly, his view of himself. We see the Expedition through the unedited writings of Lewis himself and through Clay Jenkinson's perspective on what those writings reveal.In the end, we must still speculate about what was in Lewis' heart and head on the night he took his life, but we are left with a much better understanding of the workings of that mind.

Oddities, Delights, and even Dark Corners of one of America's most famous frontiersman are explored in this newly released book. The Character of Meriwether Lewis: Completely Metamorphosed in the American West, the first book in a series is Clay Jenkinson's scholarly view on an American hero's complex character. He examines the nature of Meriwether Lewis starting with his boyhood and continues through the dark despair of alcoholism, depression and finally his suicide. Not just a dry historical account of Meriwether Lewis' life but an insight into a complex man with many quirks. The hilarity of Lewis' obsession with clothes and food together with the sadness of his depression are sure to stir your emotions. Clay gives readers new lenses into the character of Meriwether Lewis.

"I recommend this work to anyone seeking a window into the extraordinary triumph, pain, and complexity that was ... Meriwether Lewis." -- Steven Ambrose, Author of *Undaunted Courage* "Jenkinson's essay sets a new standard for humanities interpretation of the great moments of American history." -- Everett C. Albers, Director North Dakota Humanities Council About the AuthorClay S. Jenkinson, author, humanities scholar and cultural commentator, has

walked many miles in the moccasins of Meriwether Lewis. He was chief consultant, historian, scriptwriter and on camera field host for the Lewis Clark documentary, "Travelin' On". He is currently writing and narrating hundreds of Lewis Clark Minutes for radio broadcast. These minutes can be heard daily on participating radio stations across the country. In addition, Mr. Jenkinson is nationally known for his vibrant portrayals of both Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis in the Chautauqua first person tradition. Clay brings a humanities perspective to this book, a perspective he learned as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford Univeristy.