

emotional impacts of separation and reunion are universal, in what sense can they be said to particularly typify the people of China? Stafford faces this contradiction head on, arguing that there is a logical consistency, specific to Chinese culture, by virtue of which the emphasis on separation and reunion rituals serves to "connect, quite explicitly, the local world of everyday interactions, the religious world of divine interventions, and the political world of imperial (or state) control" (p. 177). To paraphrase, one might say individuals participating in any cultural system are certain to experience common human emotions in contexts of separation and reunion, but in China these experiences are brought to the fore and employed to some extent as a binding force. This explanation itself is reminiscent of cognitive theory which portrays thematicity as a centripetal or unifying factor in cultural systems.

This is not only an insightful book but one whose engaging, conversational style masks to a degree the subtlety and complexity of its thesis. It offers a variety of observations on facets of Han Chinese culture that specialists will find informative, yet at the same time it is accessible enough to serve as a text for undergraduate or graduate students in courses on China or psychological anthropology.

**Meat-Eating and Human Evolution.** Craig B. Stanford and Henry T. Bunn, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. 384 pp.

**JOHN C. MITANI**

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Few doubt that meat eating has played an important role in shaping the evolution of human behavior. Considerable controversy nonetheless exists over when, how, and why humans began to eat meat. To address these long-standing questions, Stanford and Bunn assembled a diverse group of scholars together at a workshop sponsored by the Wenner-Gren Foundation in 1998. *Meat-Eating and Human Evolution* represents the results of their discussions and writing.

Archaeology, paleoecology, primatology, and human behavioral ecology provide four sources of information that permit us to reconstruct the meat-eating behavior of our human ancestors. All of these disciplines are represented in the 16 chapters included in this volume. M. Tappan opens the book by tackling the contentious issue of whether early hominids scavenged or hunted. She reviews scavenging opportunities and payoffs in a relatively wet savanna ecosystem and concludes that such opportunities are too unpredictable and rare to represent a viable foraging strategy, either now or in the past. Archaeological material left by early humans represents the only direct evidence regarding meat-eating by early humans, and in the first section of the book, J. Speth and E. Tchernov analyze zooarchaeological remains to argue that Middle Paleolithic Neanderthals in the Levant were accomplished hunters.

Studies of nonhuman animals furnish insights into the meat-eating behavior of early humans and five chapters in the second part of this volume adopt this approach. The two papers by B. Van Valkenburgh and W. McGrew are particularly instructive. By reconstructing the paleoecological guild of carnivores that competed for meat with early hominids, Van Valkenburgh concurs with Tappan and concludes that scavenging would have been a risky and difficult way for our human ancestors to make a living. McGrew's informative review of insectivory by nonhuman and human primates reminds us that this type of "meat" could have represented a significant source of food for early hominids.

Three chapters in the third section of the book provide illustrative examples of how theory and data from human behavioral ecology can be used to understand the role of meat eating in human evolution. K. Hawkes outlines her intriguing hypothesis that economic factors alone do not explain why humans acquire and consume meat. Instead she uses costly signaling theory and observations of the behavior of contemporary chimpanzees and humans to argue that meat is a public good used to build and maintain the social reputations of successful hunters. M. Alvard summarizes evolutionary models employed to explain cooperative hunting in nonhuman animals, and applies these to account for the pattern of whale hunting off the coast of a small Indonesian village. B. Winterhalder's concluding chapter provides a comprehensive review of theory and data on food sharing in nonhuman animals. In so doing, he makes the simple, but often neglected, point that a thorough grounding in evolutionary principles derived from the study of diverse taxa will contribute to our understanding of how humans evolved.

Does this book bring us any closer to resolving when, how, and why humans began to eat meat? The editors themselves admit that the answer is probably no. The breadth of coverage will disappoint some readers. Studies that utilize the direct archaeological and fossil evidence are curiously underrepresented, and papers that address why humans made the transition to a meat-eating diet are generally absent. Others will be perturbed by the relatively long lag in publishing the proceedings of this conference, a fact that renders the data and citations in some chapters already out of date. On the positive side, readers will find a thorough mix of theory, data, and analytical approaches that continue to make the study of meat eating and human evolution a compelling topic of inquiry.