model as one explores the volume, the contributors make the task generally manageable throughout.

Readers of *American Journal of Human Biology* might be particularly attuned to ongoing, difficult to resolve debates within Anthropology regarding the importance of allo-(non-maternal)-care during hominin evolution to the emergence of human life history characteristics. While title of the volume itself succinctly speaks to its relevance across the scope of this review, there are a variety of relevant highlights meriting attention. In terms of basic principles, the volume includes emphasis throughout on the need to distinguish between “behavioral” and “evolutionary” time scales when attempting to reconstruct the conditions that give rise to evolved characteristics. Similarly, multiple contributors remind us that theoretical modeling techniques for diploid sexual species must observe the “Fisher Condition” (each offspring has a single mother and father), which is critical for model consistency (e.g. chapters 2, 6, and 11). Finally, throughout the book, there are a variety of highly pertinent theoretical and empirical updates regarding factors that contribute to the evolution of biparental care, including, for example, the adult sex ratio (versus the more commonly used operational sex ratio), sexual selection, parentage, task specialization, as well as an entire chapter devoted to the topic of cooperative breeding (including evolutionary routes to this social system). Overall, contributors to the volume help remind us that we need to operate from “first principles, rather than invoke current contingencies” (p. 105), an important consideration when attempting to model the evolutionary origin of traits versus their ongoing maintenance.

The editors identify their primary target audiences as, “new and established researchers in behavior, ecology, genetics, and development, and evolution” (pg. xvi). I feel confident stating that this volume is a key reference point for any scholar, regardless of experience level, whose research area falls in those domains and is relevant to social dynamics between parents-offspring, kin groups, and/or males-females (in sexually reproducing species). As far as teaching purposes are concerned, the volume is not intended as a textbook, though it does have a logical, contiguous orientation to its chapters. The early, review-oriented chapters of the book might be useful for specific teaching purposes vis-a-vis advanced undergraduates, such as those who might need to familiarize themselves with the nuances of terminology and history in this area of inquiry or might require a most up-to-date overview of parental care across taxa. In general, for teaching, specific sections and individual chapters of the book will likely prove most useful for graduate education (in addition to the volume’s utility for scholars’ research needs).

In this work, the editors appear to have emphasized an analytical approach that creates effective continuity and coherence across the volume, and they have brought together an impressive array of cutting-edge researchers to contribute. Although Clutton-Brock’s (1991) work will surely continue to be a classic in this area, Royle, Smiseth, and Kolliker’s *The Evolution of Parental Care* will also prove to be a comparably critical resource whose quality and importance will be upheld through time.
While I heap praise on this book, and deservedly so, there are still flaws – the first may be quite trivial to most readers, but important nonetheless, whereas others are more substantive. First, the cover of the book (a woman with lips pursed, blowing a kiss) does not represent the rigorous nature of the material within and gives the appearance of another pop science book on sexuality. We evolutionary social scientists already face an uphill battle against nonevolutionary social scientists still stuck in the “Wilson, you’re all wet” days and the cover does little to represent the complex and dynamic process underlying the formation of an individual’s sexuality, which is well presented and defended in the text. Second, while I realize the authors had to make concessions and could not cover all topics in detail, some areas needed expansion. For example, cooperative breeding was mentioned as a social system that characterizes humans and that it may have favored the evolution of empathy in our species (Hrdy 2009). The authors offer no further detail, which is unfortunate as such a discussion is necessary otherwise readers are left to piece together the argument for themselves. Lastly, while much of the information in the book is up to date, its failure to mention current debates in sexual selection theory is surprising. Trivers’ (1972) parental investment (PI) model is presented as if it were still the gold standard for explaining sex-differentiated behavior. The authors offer one citation (Kokko & Jennions 2008) that is critical of PI models, without mentioning that it is, and do not acknowledge that many sexual selection theorists argue for a reformulation of theory due to internal inconsistencies in PI models (e.g. Wade & Shuster 2002; see Kokko and Jennions 2003 for a quick description of the debate).

I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in human reproduction from an evolutionary perspective. The amount of material covered is impressive and the maintenance of academic rigor while producing an interesting, readable text is to be applauded. This is a valuable read for undergraduate and graduate students who will set this book down with a greater understanding of the dynamic nature of reproductive behavior, free from normative language regarding human sexuality and essentialized sex roles found in other published materials. Because the development of sexuality is a dynamic process and is an interaction between an individual’s physiology and socioecological context, “local sexualities”, as the authors put it, make sense in light of the context where a particular individual is.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight a take-home point from one of the chapters, “[t]here is no essential female or male. Rather, there are degrees of feminine and masculine traits.” This is a point rarely mentioned in most studies of sexuality, and evolutionary theory provides an insight into behavior that many fields lack. While there are basic biological sex differences, optimal behavior is dependent on payoffs to a particular strategy in a particular context. Therefore, due to the range of social and ecological environments that individuals find themselves in, it is clear that a range of behaviors may be adaptive – in some cases male and female behavior will be quite divergent and in others quite similar. This complex and nuanced argument is well presented in this very useful addition to the educational literature on human reproductive behavior.

LITERATURE CITED


RYAN SCHACHT
Anthropology Department
University of California, Davis
Davis, California

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