

finding release in a flood of pent-up aggression of abnormal savagery.

We have so far been dealing with the earlier stages of the feeding sequence and their ramifications. After hunting and killing, we come to the meal itself. As typical primates we ought to find ourselves munching away on small, non-stop snacks. But we are not typical primates. Our carnivorous evolution has modified the whole system. The typical carnivore gorges itself on large meals, well spaced out in time, and we clearly fall in with this pattern. The tendency persists even long after the disappearance of the original hunting pressures that demanded it. Today it would be quite easy for us to revert to our old primate ways & we had the inclination to do so. Despite this, we stick to well-defined feeding times, just as though we were still engaged in active prey-hunting. Few, if any, of the millions of naked apes alive today indulge in the typical scattered feeding routine of the other primates. Even in conditions of plenty, we rarely eat more than three, or at the very most four times a day. For many people, the pattern involves only one or two large daily meals. It could be argued that this is merely a case of cultural convenience, but there is little evidence to support this. It would be perfectly possible, given the complex organisation of food supplies that we now enjoy, to devise an efficient system whereby all food was taken in small snacks, scattered throughout the day. Spreading feeding out in this way could be achieved without any undue loss of efficiency once the cultural pattern became adjusted to it, and it would eliminate the need for the major disruptions in other activities caused by the present 'main meal' system. But, because of our ancient predatory past, it would fail to satisfy our basic biological needs.

It is also relevant to consider the question of why we heat our food and eat it while it is still hot. There are three alternative explanations. One is that it helps to simulate 'prey temperature'. Although we no longer consume freshly killed meat, we nevertheless devour it at much the same temperature as other carnivore species. Their food is hot because it has not yet cooled down: ours is hot because we have re-heated it. 168