

This file is part of [HyperGeertz@WorldCatalogue\(HTM\)](#)

Aspects of Mankind Examined Provocatively.

MAN IN PROCESS, by Ashley Montagu (World, 313 pages, \$ 4,50)

Reviewed by Clifford Geertz

in: *The Chicago Tribune* (Chicago/Ill./USA: Tribune Publishing), ISSN 1085-6706,
Sunday, June 18, 1961, p. 131.

online source: <https://www.newspapers.com/image/374614641>

Using this text is subject to the general [HyperGeertz-Copyright](#)-regulations based on the Austrian copyright-law ("Urheberrechtsgesetz 1936", version 2018, par. 40h, par. 42), which - in short - allow a personal, nonprofit & educational (all must apply) use of material stored in data bases, including a restricted redistribution of such material, if this is also for nonprofit purposes and restricted to a specific scientific community (both must apply), and if full and accurate attribution to the author, original source and date of publication, web location(s) or originating list(s) is given ("fair-use-restriction"). Any other use transgressing this restriction is subject to a direct agreement between a subsequent user and the holder of the original copyright(s) as indicated by the source(s). HyperGeertz@WorldCatalogue cannot be held responsible for any neglect of these regulations and will impose such a responsibility on any unlawful user.

original copyright 2020 by



Each copy of any part of a transmission of a HyperGeertz-Text must therefore contain this same copyright notice as it appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission, including any specific copyright notice as indicated above by the original copyright holder and/ or the previous online source(s).

Aspects of Mankind Examined Provocatively

MAN IN PROCESS, by Ashley Montagu (World, 313 pages, \$4.50).

Reviewed by Clifford Geertz

Ashley Montagu is one of the most versatile anthropologists now writing, and one of the most widely read. In 21 published books he has written about everything from "Immortality" to "The Natural Superiority of Women," from "Prenatal Influences" to "Coming Into Being Among the Australian Aborigines."

He has brilliantly and decisively demolished "Man's Most Dangerous Myth," racism, on its home grounds: the alleged physiological and psychological differences between racial groups.

• • •
He has been an effective advocate for the central role of cooperation in evolution as a corrective for the "nature red in tooth and claw" stereotype of vulgar Darwinism.

He has traced "The First Million Years" of man's history on the planet, outlined the principles of human heredity, and devised a set of 1,500 questions in terms of which one can determine one's "Culture Quotient" and decide whether one is keeping up with the Joneses [or Kennedys] culturally. He is, as the left handed compliment goes, indefatigable.

• • •
In "Man in Process," a collection of papers published in various journals, almost this whole range of topics is touched



Ashley Montagu

upon, plus a few more for good measure, so that one gets a sort of "The Best of Montagu."

In it he discourses on why man weeps, the hygienic values of swearing, how primitive peoples think babies are made, why tales of "wolf children" are just so much nonsense, what the Greeks thought about "breeding," why women ought to give birth at home, and why the theory that fossil men were cannibals probably is a libel on a people no longer around to defend themselves.

All that and much more; Prof. Montagu never is at a loss for words, subjects, or opinions. The result, particularly as he writes extremely well, is a lively, entertaining, and stimulating book.

Not every statement in it is as valid as every other; but all are equally provocative.

• • •
The heart of Prof. Montagu's book, and what makes it important rather than merely amusing, is his devastating attack on racism. Here he is on wholly solid ground, for he is perhaps the nation's leading expert on the subject, and his destruction of the pseudo-science of "blood" is total.

In fact, he demonstrates with rigorous logic and indisputable fact that the very notion of "race," as most people conceive of it, has absolutely no foundation in biological reality, but is a mere popular delusion. If you want the facts, so far as "race" is concerned, and want them clearly, simply and authoritatively presented, here they are.

And when you finish the book, you might pass it on to the governors of Alabama and Mississippi, both of whom are rather badly in need of such facts at the moment.

Clifford Geertz is an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago.