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The True Measure of Man.

By PROF. CLIFFORD GEERTZ

In a University of Chicago lecture

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The True Measure of Man

By **PROF. CLIFFORD GEERTZ**

In a University of Chicago lecture

MAN is to be defined not by his innate capacities alone, as the Enlightenment sought to do, nor by his actual behavior, as contemporary social science seeks to do, but rather by the way in which the first is transformed into the second, the generic potentialities focused on specific performance. It is in man's career, in its characteristic course, that we discern his nature. Although culture is only one element in determining that course it is hardly the least important. As culture shaped us as a single species, so too it shapes

us as separate individuals.

It is in a systematic review and analysis of the varying styles of becoming human—of the Plains Indian's bravura, the Hindu's obsessiveness, the Frenchman's rationalism, the Berber's anarchism, the American's optimism, to list a series of tags I would not like to have to defend—that we will find out what it is to be a man.

WE MUST, in short, descend into detail, past the misleading tags, the metaphysical types, the empty similarities, to grasp firmly the essential character of the various cultures as well as the various sorts of individuals within each culture.