

Book Reviews

AFRICAN GENESIS

By Robert Ardrey, Atheneum, New York, 1961. Pp. 380, 1 figure, 2 colour plates, 3 maps, 56 line drawings. Price \$6.95.

In this remarkable volume, Robert Ardrey attempts a new synthesis of "the animal origins and nature of man" based on salient discoveries in zoology and physical anthropology made over the past fifty years. A natural science major at the University of Chicago and for the next two years a lecturer on anthropology, Ardrey became a playwright during the great depression and devoted twenty years to the theatre and Hollywood. Returning to natural science, he spent five years in African travels and studies preparatory to writing *African Genesis*. With this eclectic background, Ardrey combines the necessary training in the discipline of science with the writer's art of organization, synthesis of detail and ruthless exclusion of the irrelevant and secondary.

In zoology, Ardrey relies on the pioneer work on baboons of Eugene Marais, on Dr C. R. Carpenter's studies of dominance in howler and rhesus monkeys, on Eliot Howard's epochal *Territory in Birdlife*, on W. C. Allee's *Social Life of Animals* and on a large variety of field studies. He concludes that, throughout the animal kingdom, one finds the *territorial* principle at work and the principle of *dominance*. Ardrey presents massive evidence that the sexual drive, which Darwin regarded as the mainspring of natural selection, is in fact secondary. Numerous experiments have shown that mammals, when faced with simultaneous threats to their territory and their mates, will fight for their territory first. The same applies where the choice is between food supply and mate.

Territory determines survival. Throughout large areas of the animal kingdom the majority of young adults fail to acquire and successfully defend their own particular territory. These territoryless animals fall victim *en masse* to predators; the minority that survive this hazard almost invariably fail to find mates. The role of sexual selection, according to Ardrey, is that the females seek males who are dominant and in possession of territory. With birds and quadrupeds, as with man, territory and pecking order define male eligibility. The dominant males fertilize the most desirable females in some groups and fertilize the overwhelming majority of all females in the more polygamous groups.

Pecking order studies, chiefly of birds, show that the comparatively unsuccessful males and females need the status and security which the hierarchy of dominance gives them. I would suggest, therefore, that in addition to Ardrey's principles of *territory* and *dominance*, we add that of *hierarchy*. Rank not only satisfies the ambition of the strong, but the insecurity of the weak.

Turning to man's origins, Ardrey gives a detailed analysis of the implications of the epochal discoveries of Oakley, Dart, Brain and Leakey. Man originated in Africa by descent from a special breed of carnivorous killer-apes. He is not so much man the tool-maker, as man the weapon-maker, an obvious fact which has been glossed over by generations of sentimental anthropologists. "Man is a bad weather animal," descended from primates who became carnivorous hunters under the pressure of a twelve-million-year drought in the Pliocene. The predatory instinct, combined with man's big brain, explains the presence of as many as 50,000 animal victims in the fossil deposits of a single one of Dart's caves.

When we consider man as dominated, together with other mammals,

by the principles of *territory, dominance and hierarchy*, when we view him as the lineal descendant of highly successful killer-apes, much of his psychology becomes clear. The street gangs of juvenile delinquents are man in a state of nature, and it is no enigma that they contain so few frustrated and neurotic members. The Ardrey synthesis is based on much better biological evidence and is more in accord with observation of the human species than the Freudian menagerie of supposititious psychic entities. The contemporary mania to legislate equality among nations, classes and races and to impose democracy on all of mankind stumbles against stubborn instinctual urges for private property, dominance over one's brothers, the security provided by status in a society of rank, and the opportunity to explode in spasmodic violence. Man is not measured by his instinctual nature. However, he achieves mastery of that nature by first understanding it.

N. W.

THE PROGRESS AND EVOLUTION OF MAN IN AFRICA

By L. S. B. Leakey. The Oxford University Press, London, 1961. Pp. 50, 2 plates, 2 figures. Price 9s 6d.

This volume provides a brief, but authoritative, survey of the course of human evolution against the dramatic setting of what had once been the "dark continent." Africa is conceived as the locale where truly hominid creatures, as evidenced by the Australopithecine fossils, made their first appearance. The association of artifacts "fashioned to a set and regular pattern" of Oldowan derivation with *Zinjanthropus* remains indicates that these creatures were, for all intents and purposes, truly "men." Man is, in effect, defined by the author as a "tool-making animal" (pp. 3, 37 f.). This significant development took place in Africa; Africa's subsequent cultural stagnation is understood to be the consequence of "climatic and geographic factors" (pp. 11 ff.). Similar arguments have, of course, been advanced by any number of scholars ranging in competence from Toynbee, through Huntington, to S. Biesheuvel (*cf.*, his *Aspects of Africa and Psychological Aspects of Life in a Warm Climate*, published by the National Institute for Personnel Research, Republic of South Africa). It is not our purpose here to review those arguments. Entertainment of such an explanation appears curious only because Professor Leakey makes evident his conviction that the races of man possess significantly different mental and psychological attributes:

. . . I naturally accept and even stress the fact that there are major differences, both mental and psychological, which separate the different races of mankind. Indeed, I would be inclined to suggest that however great may be the physical differences between such races as the European and the Negro, the mental and psychological differences are greater still. . . . racial differences are as real on the mental and psychological plane as they are on the purely physical. . . . We must realize that differences of race involve fundamental differences in mental make-up and in psychological approach in respect of all the day to day problems of mankind. (pp. 15, 21, 23; *cf.*, pp. 13, 16).

Given these diverse gifts, Professor Leakey does not conceive it legitimate to muster them to an explanation of the manifest differences in cultural attainment which characterize the races of man. In effect the author never tells us what these "significant" and "fundamental" differences are. Professor Leakey seems to have argued himself into a position from which it becomes impossible to inform us how he knows these differences do