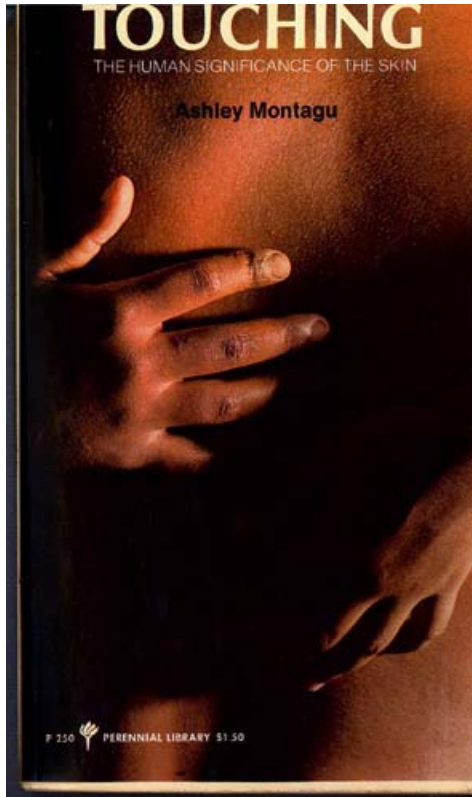


Book of The Century



Ashley Montagu (1971). *Touching. The Human Significance of The Skin*. Perennial Library. Harper & Row. New York. San Francisco. London. Published in arrangement with Columbia University Press. 406 pp.

"This book is about the skin as a tactile organ very much involved, not alone physically but also behaviorally, in the growth and development of the organism. The central referent is man, and what happens or fails to happen to him as an infant by way of tactile experience, as affecting his subsequent behavioral development, is my principle concern here". --Preface. The pioneering work that opened humanity to love and compassion or its opposite--depression and violence--jwp.

Additional Commentary

The skin as an organ, the largest organ of the body, was very much neglected until quite recently. But it is not as an organ as such that I am here concerned with the skin; rather, in contrast to the psychosomatic or centrifugal approach, I am interested in what may be called the somatopsychic or centripetal approach. In short, I am interested in the manner in which tactile experience or its lack affects the development of behavior; hence, "the mind of the skin."-Preface.

"The evidence presented in these pages suggests that adequate tactile satisfaction during infancy and childhood is of fundamental importance for the subsequent healthy behavioral development of the individual. The experimental and other research findings on other animals, as well as those on humans, show that tactile deprivation in infancy usually results in behavioral inadequacies in later life. Significant as these theoretic findings are, it is their practical value that is of primary interest to us. In short, how may these findings be utilized in the raising of healthy human beings? (p. 334).

"The newborn should be put to nurse at his mother's breast as soon as possible. The newborn should not be removed to a "nursery" nor placed in a crib. The cradle should be restored to universal usage as the best auxiliary and substitute for cradling in the mother's arms ever invented." (p.334).

"Instead of baby carriages infants should be carried on their mother's backs, and also on their father's backs, in the equivalent of the Chinese *madai* or Eskimo parka." (p.334-335).

"Any abrupt cessation of fondling should be avoided, and it is recommended that in cultures of the Western world, and in the United States particularly, parents express their affection for each other and for their children more demonstratively than they have in the past". (p.335).

"Inadequate tactile experience will result in a lack of such associations and a consequent inability to relate to others in many fundamental human ways. Hence, the human significance of touching" (p.335).