

FRANZ BOAS

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梁小民

PREFACE

ANTHROPOLOGY, the science of man, is often held to be a subject that may satisfy our curiosity regarding the early history of mankind, but of no immediate bearing upon problems that confront us. This view has always seemed to me erroneous. Growing up in our own civilization we know little how we ourselves are conditioned by it, how our bodies, our language, our modes of thinking and acting are determined by limits imposed upon us by our environment. Knowledge of the life processes and behavior of man under conditions of life fundamentally different from our own can help us to obtain a freer view of our own lives and of our life problems. The dynamics of life have always been of greater interest to me than the description of conditions, although I recognize that the latter must form the indispensable material on which to base our conclusions.

My endeavors have largely been directed by this point of view. In the following pages I have collected such of my writings as, I hope, will prove the validity of my point of view.

The material presented here is not intended to show a chronological development. The plan is rather to throw light on the problems treated. General discussions are followed by reports on special investigations on the results of which general viewpoints are based.

On the whole I have left the statements as they first appeared. Only in the discussion of the problems of stability of races and of growth which extend over many years, has scattered material been combined. In these the mathematical problems have been omitted and diagrams have been substituted for numerical tables. Here and there reviews and controversies have been included where they seemed relevant and of importance for the clearer statement of theories.

The terms "race" and "racial" are throughout used in the sense that they mean the assembly of genetic lines represented in a population.

It is natural that the earlier papers do not include data available at the present time. I have not made any changes by introducing new material because it seemed to me that the fundamental theoretical treat-

ment of problems is still valid. In a few cases footnotes in regard to new investigations or criticisms of the subject matter have been added.

I have included two very early general papers at the end of the book because they indicate the general attitude underlying my later work.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Alexander Lesser whose help and advice in the selection of material has been of greatest value.

FRANZ BOAS

Columbia University
November 29, 1939

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