



Race, Language and Culture (Classic Reprint)

Franz Boas

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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.

(Typographical errors above are due to OCR software and don't occur in the book.)

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