
This volume of papers and discussions is the result of a three-day conference held at Northwestern University in 1951, under the auspices of the Wenner-Gren Foundation and under the chairmanship of the editor. The conference, which included anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists and psychiatrists, had its origin and basis in a paper by Dr. Hsu, entitled "Anthropology or Psychiatry." The papers in the present volume by representatives of the four disciplines, vary enormously in scope, yet when all is said and done, little that is new has been presented. This is perhaps unavoidable, since the papers, in the majority, address themselves primarily to the participants in the conference who are of different professional backgrounds, and thus in each case presumably unfamiliar with the field of the speaker. More serious, and recognized as such by the participants in the final discussion is the striking lack of communication, of common language, common assumptions, common aims among the disciplines represented and the scientists representing them, while there appears to be in many instances, a good deal of ego-involvement in one's own discipline, which should be protected against trespassers. No issue, among the many raised, is fully discussed, and the topical problems of Hsu's paper are hardly dealt with. The inescapable morale of the volume seems to be recognized by the editor and by the participants: a common basis of understandings in the social sciences will not be forged by three-day conferences. If the consequences of this recognition will find implementation, conferences and volumes such as this one will have served their purpose.